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MARCH 2003
NUMBER 131

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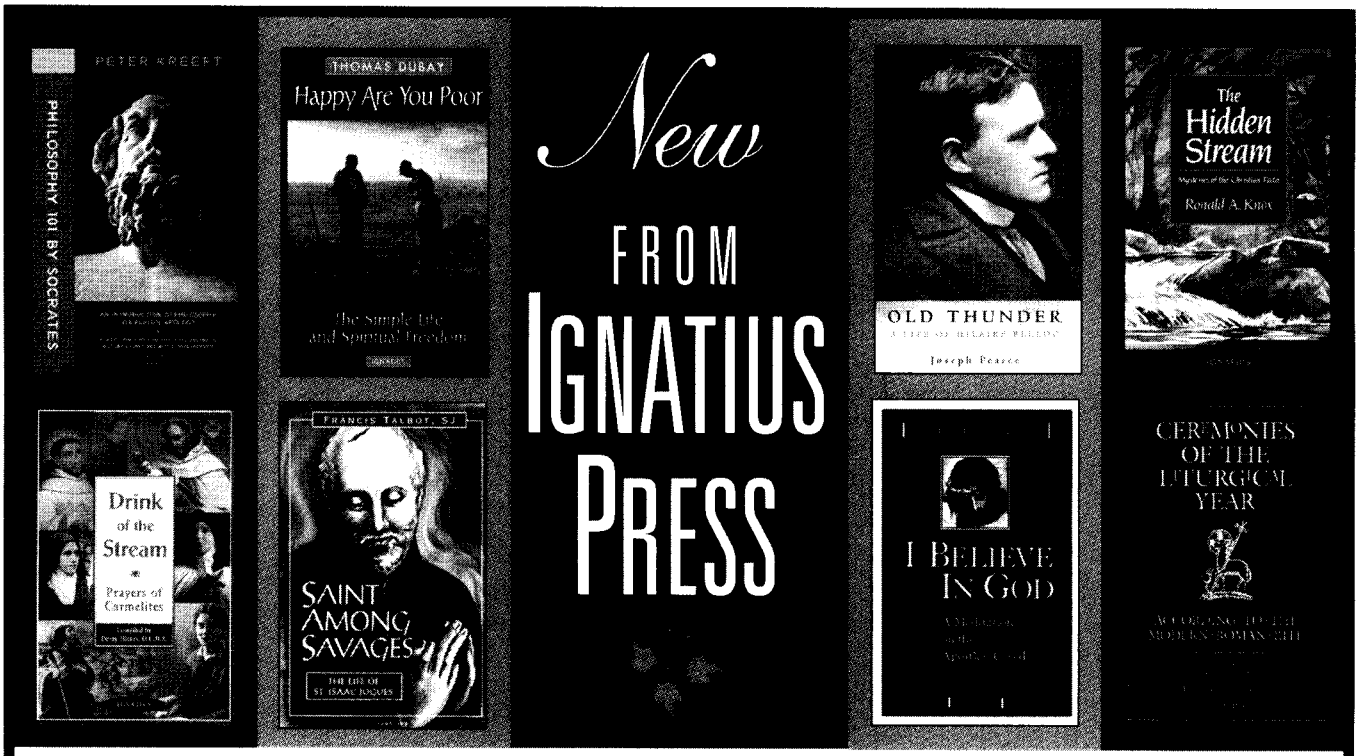

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Apocalyptic Fever

I read with considerable interest Carl E. Olson's essay on the apocalyptic fever of Tim LaHaye's vast readership ("No End in Sight," November 2002). Mr. Olson's description is more charitable towards this religious spasm than is mine. However, he makes one grotesque blooper when he identifies Fuller Theological Seminary as a "longtime dispensationalist stronghold." Where has Mr. Olson been for the last three decades and more? George Marsden's *Reforming Fundamentalism* points out in close detail the abandonment of this temper in the early days of Fuller, and as a consequence the seminary (of which I am an alumnus of the second entering class) has been the chief critic and opponent of dispensationalism.

David H. Wallace
Newport Beach, California

While Carl E. Olson needs to rethink a few details in his revisionist account of the history of dispensationalist thought—including the role of Fuller Seminary—he does score some interesting points against the movement's popularizers. I wonder, though, whether there isn't some reason for at least a little bit of generosity in assessing what these folks are getting at.

Olson makes much, for example, of the fact that dispensationalism's popularity "does not exist despite its pessimism, it feeds off it." Fair enough. But why is that such a bad thing? Dispensationalism emerged in a late-nineteenth-century cultural climate where liberal Protestants and many Roman Catholics were enamored of the myth of inevitable progress. The magazine that still calls itself the *Christian Century* was founded during that period on the conviction that the twentieth century would indeed be a "Christian century" where humankind would see significant new manifestations of peace and righteousness in the world. In contrast, the dispensationalists were predicting a century of widespread warfare and oppression. Which group of Christians best prepared their offspring for the century that was to come? If a Reinhold Niebuhr can be praised for encouraging Christians to incorporate a good dose of pessimism in their historical expectations, why should dispensationalists be criticized for feeding a bit on a pessimism that is already there?

Furthermore, whatever our aesthetic and theological misgivings about the *Left Behind* phenomenon, we do the Christian community no favors by failing to take an honest and sympathetic look at the underlying apocalypticism to which such novels respond. Indeed, the basic concerns of dispensationalist popularizers are not all that far removed from the popular Roman Catholic fascination with the apocalyptic themes associated with, say, the Fatima prophecies.

Now that Carl Olson has let off some steam about the Bible prophecy industry, maybe he can relax a bit and take on the assignment of calmly exploring the deeper hopes and fears that lead so many Christian people to buy Tim LaHaye's novels. And while he is at it, he might also pay some attention to the way in which many of his fellow Catholics ponder the apocalyptic details provided by shepherd children who tell the world what they have learned from Marian apparitions.

Richard J. Mouw
President and Professor of
Christian Philosophy
Fuller Seminary
Pasadena, California

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Carl E. Olson's sarcastic hatchet job on premillennial dispensationalism implies that John Nelson Darby of the Plymouth Brethren invented futurism and the idea of the imminent return of Christ. He does not acknowledge that many of the Church Fathers were millennial (Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus). Augustine's anti-apocalyptic amillennialism killed futurism, but it was revived by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Joachim of Fiore, and the Jesuit Francisco Ribera (1537-1591), who believed the Antichrist would conquer the world in a future three-and-a-half-year epoch. The Jesuit Manual Lacunza (1731-1801) was an ardent literalist and very premillennial.

In John Tombler and Hubert Funk's *The Raptured: A Catholic View of the Latter Days and the Second Coming* (the authors are professors at Seton Hall and the book bears the imprimatur of Bishop John Doughty), we have adherence to the return of the Jews to Palestine in the end time and a rapture of the Church. The Puritans and the Continental Pietists were premillennial and believed in a national return to Palestine. Scripture would seem to indicate that great numbers of both Jews and Gentiles who defy the Antichrist and will not take the mark of the beast will be martyred (Revelation 13).

Mr. Olson's study is filled with factual errors (Fuller Seminary—a center of dispensationalism?). I wonder if his book will treat Marian eschatology and the Fatima prophecies. How about the marvelous apocalyptic novels by Michael D. O'Brien (published by Ignatius), which, like LaHaye, purport to give plausible scenarios for end-time events? Please lighten up a little, dear Carl Olson. After all, Jesus advised us to pray that we might be able to escape the end-time wrath (Luke 21:36).

David L. Larsen
Lincolnshire, Illinois

Carl E. Olson's critique of dispensationalism is an article of the type that is long overdue in the pages of a respected theological journal. I have long wondered why serious Christian thinkers, Catholic and Protestant alike, have not given more time to debunking this errant eschatological scheme.

Olson is correct in saying that "dispensationalism's discontinuity with centuries of Christian teaching is being exposed." However, while this may be increasingly apparent to those who devote a great deal of their vocational time to the serious study of those teachings, it is not so apparent to the millions of unsuspecting Christian laity who, having been so taken by the writings of Lindsey, LaHaye, et al., often dismiss those "centuries of Christian teaching" as "traditions of men." Such a dismissive attitude toward Christian orthodoxy, fueled by a supposed adherence to "biblical literalism," is an obstacle to genuine unity in the Body of Christ. It must be overcome through a concerted and sustained effort not only to expose the errors of dispensationalism, but also to present the Truth in such a way that its message of hope and the ultimate triumph of righteousness will silence all the scoffers.

(The Rev.) James A. Gibson
Marshallville United Methodist Church
Marshallville, Georgia

Carl E. Olson replies:

First, I thank Mr. Wallace for pointing out my lamentable gaffe regarding the doctrinal persuasions of Fuller Theological Seminary. I suppose it is not as bad as Tim LaHaye's statement that the Catholic practice of "burning candles" is a sign of apostasy, but it is regrettable, and I acknowledge my error.

Professor Mouw alludes to problems with "a few details" in my article and Mr. Larsen states that my study is "filled with factual errors." Unfortunately, neither of them provides actual examples (save my reference to Fuller, but one error does not warrant the descriptive "filled"). In addition, they emotionally chastise me for being emotional about this topic. Since we appear to be at a standstill on that front, I'll focus on the facts.

Prof. Mouw refers to my account of dispensationalist history as "revisionist." How so? Again, no examples are given. Regardless, I do agree that nineteenth-century dispensationalists reacted against liberal Christian movements—as my article indicates, the movement has always been reactionary. And it is true that predictions by nineteenth-century dispensationalists of a century of warfare and oppression came to fruition. But being correct about some details does not legitimize the underlying theological premises of the movement, namely, its low ecclesiology and fatalistic view of history. There is a significant difference between saying man is fallen and prone to warfare, and saying that mankind is completely depraved, absolutely doomed, and destined for a rapidly approaching cataclysm. I would suggest that neither naive liberalism (as it existed in the late

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1800s) nor despairing dispensationalism prepared their offspring well for the twentieth century.

A more proper perspective, embraced by the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox, and many Protestants, is that man is wounded by sin, but is still capable of good. History is neither an inevitable progression to utopia nor a fatalistic spiral into destruction, but a path filled with conflict between good and evil. Today's secular idealist declares, "There is nothing to fear," and popular dispensationalists state, "There is much to fear!" Meanwhile, the voice of reason agrees with our Lord, "Be not afraid!" Pope John Paul II, of course, uttered these words at the start of his pontificate.

The *Left Behind* books undeniably tap into a deep well of "underlying apocalypticism," especially if by that we mean the natural human desire to have certainty and assurance in a world that is filled with chaos and sin. This yearning reveals itself in many ways, including, as Prof. Mouw notes, various Catholic movements that sometimes fail to understand private revelation in the context of public revelation and Church teaching. The fact that there are pessimistic and apocalyptic-minded Catholics does not prove anything about dispensationalism, but says much of the dangers of straying from the norms of Scripture, Tradition, and authoritative teaching.

My book *Will Catholics Be Left Behind?* (to be published this spring) does address in detail the reasons why books such as the *Left Behind* novels sell so well and why forms of dispensationalism continue to be so popular in America. It is difficult to gauge the numbers, but I have no doubt that the percentage of conservative Protestants who embrace some form of dispensationalism is far higher than the percentage of Catholics who adhere to apocalyptic visions based upon Marian apparitions. After all, the best-selling nonfiction book of the past thirty years is Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970), and the *Left Behind* books are the all-time best-selling works of Christian fiction. Sales of Catholic books with apocalyptic themes pale in comparison.

Mr. Larsen's letter begins with an ad hominem attack and then regresses from there. I did not, in fact, imply that Darby invented futurism. Rather, I stated that Darby "constructed the premillennial dispensational system," which is a specific and unique form of millenarianism and futurism. Mr. Larsen makes the mistake of equating millennialism with dispensationalism, when the latter is actually a particular type of the former. Yes, many of the early Church Fathers were millenarians, and so were some later Catholics and Protestants. But the early Church Fathers never embraced the central premises of dispensationalism, including the radical dichotomy between Israel and the Church and the resulting two peoples of God, one earthly and one heavenly in nature and mission.

Several Catholics throughout history have proposed unique end-time scenarios. The Catholic Church has rejected many of these ideas, both implicitly and explicitly. Some of Joachim of Fiore's ideas were officially condemned by the Fourth Lateran Council, while Lacunza, a renegade Jesuit who held to a form of the pretribulational Rapture, was openly at odds with the Church on many counts. What the Catholic Church has officially taught is that "the Church must pass through a final trial" and will do battle with the Antichrist (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §675). The Church has also clearly rejected all forms of millenarianism (whether secular or religious), describing such attempts as "falsification[s] of the kingdom" (*CCC* §676).

Mr. Larsen seems to think that I am opposed to any speculation about the last moments of the world. In fact, my biggest concern with dispensationalism is its misuse of Scripture in the service of seriously flawed forms of Christology and ecclesiology. These, in turn, result in a sensationalized eschatology that often relies on fear, anger, and vengeance to motivate and move adherents.

Finally, I thank Pastor Gibson for his kind remarks. He asks why serious Christian thinkers so often ignore dispensationalism. I believe it is because they misjudge its tremendous influence and impact on millions of Americans, they do not understand the underlying premises and logical conclusions of the dispensational system, and they believe it is a fringe movement on its deathbed. I hope that my article and book might correct some of these misconceptions.

The Turning of the Tide

In "Abortion in the Tides of Culture" (December 2002), Frederica Mathewes-Green considers mainstream society's increasingly intolerant attitude toward drunkenness and speculates that our society may analogously reject abortion and the other aspects of the sexual revolution eventually as well, not so much as a result of our preaching, but simply because people may eventually realize that the assumptions and lifestyle of the sexual revolution do not in fact lead to happiness. Her optimism is well founded. The same God is the author of our natural intellect as well as revelation, as classical Catholic theology so often reminds us, so we should not be surprised if what the Church teaches makes wonderful sense also just from a purely natural point of view and people end up doing what the Church recommends, not because she recommends it, but just because it is the most sensible thing to do.

Artificial contraception is a case in point. In my oh-so-politically-correct neighborhood here in Los Angeles, where Republicans do not even figure on the ballot, the new craze seems to be natural family planning—"fertility awareness." The Bible of the movement, Toni Weschler's *Taking Charge of*

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Your Fertility, made the local best-seller list and presents artificial contraception as a gigantic female-exploitation industry and the ultimate form of male domination of women. Written from a purely secular perspective, the book even speaks of the advantages of periods of abstinence for a relationship as a means of rekindling the romantic feelings of courtship and experiencing afresh the joys of the honeymoon. The tide may very well be starting to turn already—perhaps even despite us—so let us not lose Christian hope.

Robert Rakauskas
Los Angeles, California

Many thanks to Frederica Mathewes-Green for an insightful analysis of the current cultural shortsightedness with respect to abortion and related life issues. The comparison with earlier attitudes towards alcohol consumption is particularly apt.

However, there are at least two crucial differences between that earlier generation's casual treatment of alcohol consumption and our own culture's easygoing approach to sex. These suggest that the latter may be more difficult to dislodge over the long term.

The first of these revolves around what Michael Ignatieff has recently termed the "rights revolution." The repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment was not primarily effected by the argument that prohibition in some fashion violated the inalienable right of citizens over their own bodies or that it infringed on a supposed constitutionally guaranteed equality of beverage choices. Prohibition was reversed because of the federal and state governments' prudential judgment that it had been a practical and social failure, spawning organized crime and making criminals of ordinary, otherwise law-abiding citizens.

Fast forward several decades to the 1960s and '70s. The sexual revolution and the associated abortion license were immeasurably facilitated by a culture now preoccupied with what Mary Ann Glendon has famously termed "rights talk." In this context a series of judicial decisions concerning obscenity, freedom of expression, and, most notoriously, abortion itself has effectively elevated these new "rights" to the status of an orthodoxy from which dissent is increasingly not tolerated. However much pressure was placed upon people to wink at excessive drinking in the past, nondrinkers and moderate drinkers were not generally threatened with legal action for telling the truth about alcoholism or for "discriminating" against alcoholics in hiring and housing.

It is, of course, possible that the society of our grandchildren will have seen through the rights fixation of the current generation, along with its casual treatment of sex. But, given the development of liberalism over the past two centuries, this would seem to require a deliberate act of the will contrary to long-unfolding and deep-seated historical trends.

The second difference concerns the role of the churches. In the first half of the twentieth century no church bodies would have considered arguing that drunks are "cool." Even the most theologically accommodating denomination could hardly have gotten away with endorsing excess in this area. However, today the major church bodies, with few exceptions, have simply caved in to the wider culture on sex and life issues. If the courts and the media have led the way, the churches have followed in lock step, doing little more than to parrot uncritically the preaching of the former.

David T. Koyzis
Associate Professor of
Political Science
Redeemer University College
Ancaster, Ontario, Canada

Frederica Mathewes-Green replies:
Mr. Rakauskas' words are very encouraging. And if members of the cultural avant-garde are questioning contraception, can questioning abortion be far behind? In several ways it seems the rising generation is more self-disciplined, moral, and responsible than we Boomers, and I put a lot of hope in them as well. When the Boomers' long toga party is over and they're changing our Depends, they'll have their work cut out for them.

Professor Koyzis' argument is certainly well-founded. I guess I take hope from the statistics showing, over the last five to seven years, that people in their late teens and twenties are much more pro-life than older generations—each year, the freshmen surveyed in the UCLA poll of incoming college students are more opposed to abortion, and more in favor of premarital chastity. I'm hoping that this trend will continue until it reaches critical mass, though it may well remain invisible as long as older people, who are largely pro-choice, control the media outlets. It's anyone's guess what the reason for this change is. I would suggest that it's due to an awakening to the real pain that promiscuity and abortion entail; others might say that it's actually based in "rights talk," that young people identify with aborted children (as of this January 22, anyone under the age of thirty could have been aborted) and see abortion as an attack on their siblings and classmates, rather than a matter of women's self-determination.

The Pause that Refreshes

The pause between the second and third sentences in the Hail Mary does not represent, as Randy Boyagoda says ("Halfway Through the Hail Mary," December 2002), the moment "when God took human form," when "the Word has become flesh." That event happened, of course, at the Annunciation, marked by the first sentence in the prayer. At the Visitation, evoked in the second sentence, Mary was already the mother of Elizabeth's Lord (Luke 1:43) and ours—within the first trimester of his life among us.

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The pause before the turn of the prayer comprises Christ's Passion, Death, Resurrection, Ascension—everything that we recall in the other thirteen, er, eighteen Mysteries of the Rosary—as well as two thousand years of his life in the Church since then. The pause links those mighty moments in time past with the two moments in time that we ourselves are guaranteed to experience.

Jerome Colburn
Champaign, Illinois

Randy Boyagoda replies:

Jerome Colburn is not the first individual to point out to me the scriptural and biological flaws with my suggestion of precisely "when God takes human form." He's correct to indicate that Mary would already have been the "mother of Elizabeth's Lord and ours" prior to the time and space between the second and third sentences of the Hail Mary, and his alternative suggestions for the significance of the pause are perceptive and convincing.

My initial intention in proposing the pause as the paramount moment of change was to stress a participatory action that indicates our reverence for and wonder over the most blessed event in human history as we pray the prayer. Suggesting that the Incarnation takes place in the pause is in harmony with the logic of the prayer when considered in precise poetic, and more general theological and scriptural, terms. That we address Mary as the Mother of God only after that pause in part inspired me to think of the prayer in this mode; the blessed absence constituted by the Word becoming flesh (John 1:14) seems perfectly to fit into that pause in the middle of the prayer, especially in poetic terms, though of course, the theological and biological take final precedence. Thanks to Mr. Colburn for his astute response.

The Meaning of Celibacy

I read Maximos Davies' "Celibacy in Context" (December 2002) with some puzzlement. The article seems to hinge on the idea that the Latin Church and its people are unaware of the difference between monastic celibacy and mandatory celibacy for the secular priesthood. This distinction is made in presenting the difference for the place of celibacy within the Eastern Orthodox Church in contrast to the Latin Church. I am puzzled because the current discussion on priestly celibacy within Roman Catholicism consistently locates the debate in the context of the diocesan, or secular, priesthood. In a church rich with religious orders, it is peculiar for someone to write as if the Roman clergy and laity did not know the difference.

It is my understanding that the current debate preserves monastic celibacy within the religious orders, just as it does for the Eastern Church. The raising of the question of celibacy is particular to the diocesan priesthood. For that manner of priestly calling, many call for "optional celibacy." No one is calling for such an option for religious orders. That would negate the whole concept of living in religious community. While there may be some lack of literacy on this issue for average churchgoers, they usually catch on quickly when the difference is pointed out. It does not seem as if Father Davies credits the Latin Church with knowing itself. And that is indeed peculiar.

MaryEllen O'Brien
Chicago, Illinois

Maximos Davies replies:

If I understand the question Ms. O'Brien raises, she read my essay as suggesting that celibacy as a *concept* was in question in the Latin Church. I doubt this is so, and in any event that was not my point. That point is simply this: celibacy must be treated less like one possible lifestyle and more like the basic Christian discipline that it is. Only this will prevent the pool of mandatory celibates—no matter how large or small that pool may be—from becoming a marginal and increasingly irrelevant and isolated ecclesial group.

It is of course none of my business whether the Latin Church allows married men to be ordained to the diocesan priesthood. If it wishes, by all means let it impose the most radical form of celibacy only on monastics and religious. This is not my concern. What I was trying to argue in my article was this: the celibacy to which some are called by special vocation and the chastity to which all are called by baptism are not two distinct things. They are essentially linked, and if one goes then both may well be lost.

I certainly do believe that the Eastern Churches have very clearly maintained the link between celibacy or, if you prefer, chastity, and baptism. They have done this by retaining the very clear connection between celibacy and monastic life which is simply the life of all the baptized lived to its radical conclusion.

Whether or not this idea, with all its ascetical implications, has been so clearly realized in the culture of the Latin Church is something that might be worth a debate, but it is not one in which I intended to engage when writing my article. If Ms. O'Brien can agree with me that celibacy or chastity must retain its essential meaning as a common baptismal vocation before it can be embraced by anyone in its most radical form, then I hope that in whatever other way my article may have puzzled her we may at least agree in fundamentals.

The Radical Brownson

Apropos "Orestes Brownson and the Truth About America" (December 2002), it is not surprising that Brownson is neglected today and, as Peter Augustine Lawler writes, has basically been forgotten. It seems to me that the reason he is neglected is that—even though he has many things of value to say that are radical in the sense of getting to the root of the matter—he often goes too far (is

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"radical") in the sense of reaching conclusions that are too extreme in fact and that lose their practical value in application.

For example, as Mr. Lawler points out, Brownson makes some valuable comments when he emphasizes the importance of the solidarity and interdependence of humans and what naturally follows from that, but it seems to me that Brownson then goes too far in concluding that "civic virtues are themselves religious virtues" and even that "he who dies on the battlefield for his country ranks with him who dies for his faith." (Even though the latter statement pleases me, as an old infantryman, both statements seem to me to border on the heretical.) How could these statements be true? Does it mean that loyalty equals faith and good citizenship equals charity? Brownson justifies these ideas by using the gospel saying that "no man who does not love his brother can love God." He seems to be equating dying for your country with love of your brother, which, while it might be true in some cases, is clearly not true in many others.

When we look at Brownson's writing on education, we find the same faults. His basic principles are worth keeping in mind. He points out the close relationship of education and virtue—"bad education is worse than none," "virtue without intelligence will only fit the masses to be duped," and "the more you extend intelligence, unless you extend the moral restraints and influences of the gospel at the same time, the more you sharpen the intellect for evil." However, he goes on to criticize, at some length, the failure, as he saw it, of education of his day—which he says is based on Protestantism—to teach the necessary virtues and concludes with the exaggerated statement that "only in the bosom of the Catholic Church can this [moral education] be found." He seemed to be saying that the American system of public education would necessarily fail unless Catholic teaching was taught as an integral part of the curriculum. This was not possible or practical in his day nor is it in ours under the kind of Constitution we have. Brownson's conclusion has no chance for implementation and that is why it, and suggestions like it, have been ignored.

James J. Guthrie
Lowell, Massachusetts

Peter Augustine Lawler replies:
Mr. Guthrie is right to wonder whether Brownson sometimes doesn't go too far. But on the question of Catholic education, Brownson is surely right that only the Catholic (roughly, Thomistic) tradition of thought properly integrates intelligence and virtue into a single view of a good human person. Protestants tend to favor virtue and disparage reason, and secularists or progressivists are all for reason or science but can't think properly about either the foundation or the proper inculcation of virtue. Brownson didn't favor abandoning our constitutional separation of church and state, but his hope was that Americans were ready to be convinced to convert to true religion.

Correction

In a letter to the editor that appeared in the December 2002 issue, I wrote in support of my former pastor, Father Bob Kealy. Unfortunately, in that letter I erroneously hypothesized about the allegation against Fr. Kealy based on hearsay information circulating in the parish.

I understand that Fr. Kealy has chosen not to make statements about the allegation and to deal with it within the realm of Church procedures. I incorrectly implied that Fr. Kealy admitted to the allegation. This was not based on any personal knowledge, but on hearsay that I have now learned was unfounded. Furthermore, my statements about Fr. Kealy's alleged abuse of alcohol many years ago were not based on any personal knowledge, but were simply my supposition from the information that had been passed on. From my personal experience, as emphasized in my letter, Fr. Kealy has always conducted himself in an exemplary priestly manner.

In the present highly charged environment, the mere announcement that there has been an accusation unfortunately leads even admirers of a priest to make erroneous assumptions and accept hearsay. That too is a cause of concern. Too often good priests are presumed guilty until proven innocent, and while their lawyers advise them not to make any statements and their church processes drag on, their hard-earned reputations suffer irreparable damage.

I am sorry that my previous letter contained these errors. Fr. Kealy has suffered grievously as a result of the allegations made against him and the resultant publicity. In my attempt to speak out for him, I have made a bad situation worse.

John T. McEnroe
Winnetka, Illinois

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Opinion

Letter from Germany

Wolfhart Pannenberg

There is no denying that German-U.S. relations were ruffled, if not rocked, by last September's election. During the summer, polls indicated that the Social Democratic Party and its leader, Gerhard Schröder, would lose because of popular anxiety about the economy, especially unemployment. Four years earlier, when Schröder was first elected chancellor, he declared that he would be unworthy of reelection if the number of unemployed, then four million, was not dramatically reduced. Last summer, however, the figure had risen to almost ten percent of the work force. Schröder was saved by the disastrous flooding of the Elbe River. He was very visibly everywhere, comforting victims and promising all kinds of government assistance. It was a compassionate and caring role that only the chancellor could play, putting his Christian Democrat challenger at a distinct disadvantage. Schröder appeared as the man in charge, and his polling numbers rose accordingly. The public had always been more receptive to his personal charms than to his party, and Schröder played his part to the hilt.

Then, just before the election, Schröder seized on the issue of Iraq. Since World War II, and for understandable reasons, Germans have been frightened by the prospect of involvement in another war, any war. They were most particularly frightened by the idea of a preventive or "preemptive" war, the kind of warfare Germany had practiced in the last century with catastrophic consequences. Schröder played skillfully on this anxiety, declaring that under his leadership Germany would have no part of what was depicted as reckless U.S. belligerence toward Iraq. Many Germans viewed his position as the mark of strong and trustworthy leadership, while others thought it irresponsible and self-serving. His Christian Democrat opponent was hardly more eager to go for war but addressed the question in more balanced terms, accusing Schröder of jeopardizing relations with America, a crucial and long-standing ally.

Yet the more nuanced language of Edmund Stoiber gave the impression that he was irresolute and wavering. While Schröder's talk about a "German way" of doing things alarmed foreign observers, it went down well with most Germans. It seems unlikely that Schröder intended to mobilize anti-American sentiment among Germans, for, in fact, such sentiment is relatively weak. The academic and media left notwithstanding, there are few nations in the world less anti-American than Germany. Schröder's purpose was to project an image of strong and decisive leadership, and in that he succeeded.

Keep in mind that Germany is securely integrated into, and is one of the most fervent advocates of, the European Union. Germans are keenly aware that German nationalism has been tried and found disastrously wanting. There is no doubt that Germany has benefited economically from the EU, even if there is unhappiness about its having to bear a disproportionate financial burden in support of EU structures. Germany strongly backs the inclusion of Central and Eastern European countries in the EU, and cherishes the particular hope that within a few years relations between Germany and Poland will be as uncomplicated and amicable as its present relations with France, which was for centuries the "archenemy."

The present economic weakness of the country is a new experience after decades of prosperity, which helps explain why it played such a large part in the 2002 election campaign. Germany is accustomed to thinking of itself as the motor force of European recovery, not the laggard that it has become. The main problem, in the view of most observers, is the overregulation of the labor market with its excessive protection of workers that makes it prohibitively expensive to create new jobs. Wages and social security entitlements are among the highest in the world, and powerful unions, integrated across the lines of various industries, pose a formidable obstacle to change.

Of course, the economic problems are related as well to the worldwide recession, and a general recovery would no doubt significantly improve the situation. There is another factor, however: the long-term economic burden resulting from the reunification of Germany in 1989. The magnitude of this burden was at first greatly underestimated. The total breakdown of the socialist economies of Eastern Europe, on which East Germany was almost entirely dependent, occurred with startling rapidity. More than a decade later, and despite the equivalent of hundreds of billions of dollars from the former West Germany, the East is far from achieving the levels of employment and affluence to which West Germans have long been accustomed.

Economics, however, is not the most important burden resulting from the reunification of Germany. Forty years of Communist rule devastated the East cul-

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turally. This is true in education and also—more than in other Communist-dominated countries—in religion. In the former heartland of the Lutheran Reformation, Protestant Christianity is now a small minority. While dechristianization is massively evident in the East, the situation is not all that different in Western Germany. Since the 1960s, both Protestant and Catholic churches have been steadily declining in membership and influence. This is in sharp contrast to the first two decades after the war, when Germany was eager to reclaim its place in Western culture and to distance itself from the ruins of Nazism. Cultural reclamation included affirming Germany's specifically Christian heritage, which was helped by the fact that the churches had been less morally compromised than other institutions during the Third Reich. In the years immediately after the war, there was a strong sense of Christian renewal.

But that changed abruptly toward the end of the sixties, when the American-inspired protest against the Vietnam War swept Europe and produced the student revolution. Especially in France and Germany, that movement was powerfully influenced by neo-Marxist ideas, and in Germany by the "Frankfurt school"—led by such as Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Jürgen Habermas—which largely framed the public debate. The German student movement really was a cultural revolution directed against all forms of "repressive" authority—primarily the educational system, but also moral values rooted in Christianity, and emphatically the "authoritarian" family structure. The cultural revolution, including a new wave of sexual "liberation," was at first seen as a youthful phenomenon that would soon pass, but its deep and lasting consequences are now obvious. The traditional system of higher education has been dramatically changed in most of the country. The classics, including the classical languages, survive only at the margins; the leading figures of the student revolution, now in their sixties, are predominant in the media, the universities, and the courts.

The traditional understanding of the family has taken severe hits. Article 6 of the Constitution provided very particular protections for marriage and family life, but last year the highest court declined to overrule new legislation that gives equal status to alternative forms of living together. Government-funded day care is explicitly promoted as a way of ending the family's "supremacy over children's beds." The language of "cultural revolution" is employed not only by the critics of these changes but also by the proponents. They leave no doubt that cultural revolution is exactly what they have in mind.

Whether they will succeed is another matter. While many marriages end in divorce, and many people live together and have children without benefit of civil or ecclesial rites, the ideal held by young people is still that of a lifelong union of man and woman within the institution of marriage. The churches have a deep stake in supporting that ideal, which is grounded in Christian understandings and practices that have no real parallel in other cultures. The sociologist Helmut Schelsky predicted decades ago that—despite social convulsions and the high incidence of divorce—most people would still be attracted to the model of marriage as the lifelong union of man and woman, seeing it as the most likely route to personal fulfillment. In this, he seems to have been vindicated. After the secularization of the state, the institution of marriage and family holds the most secure promise for the religious socialization of future generations. Not for nothing do those who are most determined to effect a complete break between society and religion focus on undermining the legal and social status of marriage and family.

Despite that campaign, young people evidence a renewed appreciation of marriage and family. A greater challenge may be posed by demographic developments. There are fewer and fewer young people. In Germany, as in Western Europe generally and in Italy most particularly, people are not having babies. These countries would be on a trajectory of decreasing population were it not for immigrants from Muslim countries. There are no doubt many reasons why the original German population is not reproducing, including the secular individualism nurtured by affluent societies and the attitudes and practices associated with what John Paul II calls "the culture of death." Having children is no longer considered a duty owed the future but is viewed as one of many possibilities to be taken into account in calculating personal satisfaction and securing one's preferred way of life. To that end, contraception is assumed, with abortion as a backstop. Since the liberalizing of the law, there are in Germany more than 300,000 abortions per year.

The other side of the declining number of children and young people is, of course, the increasing number of old people. The decrease in population, some contend, could be compensated for by increased immigration. This assumes that immigrants will be fully integrated into German and European culture, which assumes, in turn, that we have a clear and confident sense of cultural identity. It is no secret, however, that over recent decades a large number of immigrants came not in order to be part of German society nor even to find work but to benefit from our social security and health services. Their self-interest is perfectly understandable. Many are not interested in learning the German language, and those from Muslim countries tend to live in ghetto-like quarters of the cities. At present, there are about three million Muslim immigrants in Germany, mainly from Turkey, while in France and Italy

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the Muslim immigrants come chiefly from North Africa. Moreover, since Islam entails also a different system of law, there are difficulties in accepting the secular order of law based on the German Constitution, especially since many Muslims are taught in the mosques that Islamic law is superior.

Public expressions of concern about Muslim immigration are often dismissed as evidence of a "right-wing" phobia, and the concern can no doubt be exploited by extremists. But among thoughtful Germans and Europeans more generally there is a deep and haunting, although often unspoken, anxiety that increased Muslim immigration, combined with the higher birth rates of immigrants, is working fundamental changes in our societies. It is foreseeable in the not too distant future, for instance, that in some of our larger cities Muslims will no longer be a tolerated minority but a majority, and will make political claims consonant with their majority status. It is in this connection that one must understand the nervousness of German and other European leaders when it comes to granting Turkey full membership in the EU. With full membership comes the right to work and live in any of the member states, and the prospect of even more massive Muslim immigration. Both Europe and America have economic, political, and security reasons for cultivating close cooperation with Turkey, but it would seem that full membership in the EU is unlikely in the near future. In addition to the worries about immigration, there is the problem of Cyprus and, more important, the need to bring Turkey's economic and legal system into line with European standards, including respect for human rights and, most particularly, for religious freedom, as witness the treatment of the dwindling Greek Orthodox community in that country.

The great challenge for Germany and Europe is the recovery of a culture rooted in Christianity. Without that, it is fair to say, there is no future for a united Europe. John Paul II made this point with marvelous clarity in his address to the Italian parliament last November. For the flourishing of an EU that is both European and a real union, economics is not enough. Yet, despite the urgings of the Pope and the demands of many Christian politicians, there seems to be little chance at this point that the EU Constitution will make explicit reference to God or the continent's Christian heritage. The preamble of the German Constitution of 1949 contains such a reference, although it is doubtful that even the Germans would support that today. But the strongest opposition to such a reference in the European Constitution comes, not surprisingly, from the French, who are attached to that country's still powerful laicist tradition.

Neutrality toward religion does not have the same meaning in some European countries, and increasingly in Germany, that it has in the U.S. It does not mean that the state should not favor one church or religious association over another, but that the state should not recognize the religious dimension of culture at all. The unembarrassed way in which American Presidents and other political leaders refer to God and invoke the religious dimensions of culture is hardly imaginable in Germany or France. The public silence about religion reinforces popular ignorance or indifference with respect to Europe's cultural origins and their continuing importance.

It must be admitted that the churches themselves bear a large responsibility for this unhappy circumstance. Church leaders and Christian thinkers are still captive to the idea that Christianity must be made relevant by adapting its message to the assumptions and sensibilities of a secular culture. One might argue that almost the opposite is required. An unabashed proclamation of the cross and resurrection, of hope for eternal life, and of divine judgment might again make Christianity interesting, challenging, and something of a redemptive scandal. Christian preachers and writers might even find the nerve to speak of something so outré as obedience to moral truth. That Christianity proposes a different way of living, a different understanding of freedom and fulfillment, was in the early church one of its chief attractions. That could happen again, if Christian leaders have the nerve, the intelligence, and the faith for it. The alternative is more of the same: the false freedom of undirected choice, the futile efforts to satisfy insatiable appetites, the blunting of the human capacity for truth and transcendence. The alternative, in short, is the culture of death. And with that, the continuing perception that Christianity is simply irrelevant.

There is, I believe, no danger of an anti-American insurgency in Germany. More pressing problems have to do with economic stagnation and the still uncompleted tasks of reunification with the East. Those problems are generally recognized. More controversial is the discussion of the continuing march of the cultural revolution through German institutions, including marriage and the family, and the ominous implications of demographic decline combined with massive Muslim immigration. What does it mean to be German? What does it mean to be European? All the countries of the EU, including those now being admitted to membership, are being forced to ask the hard questions of cultural identity.

Whatever its economic benefits, the EU is presumably more than an economic union. Whether the EU is to be formed above cultural identities, or through cultural identities, or somehow around cultural identities, what Germany and the other member nations

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bring to the EU are cultural identities inseparable from their Christian origins and continuing influence. At present, that influence appears to be in decline, and some are clearly betting that it will, in time, disappear altogether. If they get their way, we face the possibility of an EU divorced from what is culturally identifiable as Europe. Many Europeans, including many Germans, are deeply and, I believe, rightly worried about that prospect.

Wolfhart Pannenberg *is Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Munich and founding director of the Institute of Ecumenical Theology.*

Remembering Ivan Illich

Peter L. Berger

Ivan Illich died in Bremen on December 2, 2002 at the age of seventy-six. As a German friend of his put it: "God gave him a beautiful death." Illich suddenly collapsed while at work in his study and died immediately. The *New York Times* obituary noted, quite correctly, that Illich's influence was long past. A young colleague to whom I mentioned his passing, for example, had never heard of him. But the stature of a man must not be measured by the shifting winds of fashion. At one time Illich had been an important figure in the intellectual world—no less than in my life.

Illich was born in Vienna, the son of a Croatian father and a German-Jewish mother. He studied in Salzburg and in Rome, finished with a doctorate in history, and was ordained as a Roman Catholic priest. Contrary to what many people assumed, he wanted it known that he had never ceased to be a priest. He did not write about theology, but his thought and his piety were marked by a very conservative Catholicism. Once, when he was sick, I visited him in his bedroom in Cuernavaca. It was spartan, reminiscent of a monastic cell. Over his bed hung an enormous crucifix.

Illich moved to New York in 1951, serving in a largely Latino parish. In 1956 he became vice-rector of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico, where he got into trouble with the local hierarchy because he criticized the role of the Church in Puerto Rican politics. In 1960 he moved to Cuernavaca, Mexico, where he founded the institution that served as his base for many years—the Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC). It was a most unusual place. Located on an attractive rented estate, it was a think tank bringing together for lectures and innumerable conversations a highly heterogeneous group of bright people—North and Latin Americans, Europeans, Catholics and non-Catholics, from the left and the right. CIDOC had no outside funding. It sustained itself in an uncommon way—by operating a very successful program of instruction in Spanish, charging the usual rates for this kind of activity.

Illich wrote and published continuously. His book *Celebration of Awareness: A Call for Institutional Revolution* (1969) was an injunction to think and live autonomously, in defiance of convention. Illich quickly became a celebrity, especially in circles identified with the burgeoning counterculture. He spoke to large audiences in the Americas and in Europe. One book followed another. *Deschooling Society* (1971), a frontal assault on modern education, probably his best-known work. *Tools for Conviviality* (1973), a call for human relations freed from the constraints of status and consumership. *Energy and Equity* (1974), a work in tune with many of the themes of the emergent environmental movement. *Medical Nemesis* (1976), an attack on the technologization and impersonality of modern medicine, which opened with the lapidary sentence: "The medical establishment has become a major threat to health." Toward the end of the 1970s came an influential essay, "Shadow-Work," which criticized the downgrading of unpaid labor, especially that of women—needless to say, it was hailed by feminists.

It is easy to see why Illich's ideas resonated well in the cultural climate of the time. But he disappointed, one by one, most of the groups who first believed him to be one of them. Catholics were irritated when he criticized missionaries in Latin America as cultural imperialists. The counterculture discovered that he found repugnant many if not most of their proclivities, from drugs to promiscuous sex. He upset the left when, after a visit to Cuba, he described the Castro regime as an odious tyranny. And feminists were deeply offended when he argued, some years after "Shadow-Work," that women had been better off in traditional societies in which they devoted themselves to the life of the family. Illich was a genie who could not be kept in any bottle. Like Goethe's Mephistopheles, he was a "spirit who ever negates."

What impressed most about Illich was his enormous vitality, personal as well as intellectual. Switching easily between languages, he delved into conversations with zest. But he was a respectful and enthusiastic listener, especially when he encountered a new idea. He dominated the intellectual life at CIDOC, not by imposing his ideas on others, but by the sheer force of his own. Once, with his friend the Brazilian bishop Helder Camara, he traveled throughout Latin America from one carnival

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festival to another. To get a sense of Africa, he went on a walking tour through the southern Sahara. He repeatedly visited Benares, where he stayed in Hindu temples. CIDOC declined along with Illich's influence as the cultural climate changed. Opposed to anything that smacked of "schooling," he made almost no effort to control the program. All sorts of people were allowed to lecture, some of them with quite outlandish ideas. A sort of intellectual Gresham's Law ensued: the good people increasingly stayed away. When this became evident to Illich, he made what must have been a difficult decision—he shut the place down, keeping only an archive of materials on topics that had concerned CIDOC, managed by his long-time collaborator Valentina Borremans.

Thereafter Illich led an itinerant life between Cuernavaca and Bremen (where he had a devoted group of collaborators around Barbara Duden), with brief teaching stints in the United States. His publications dealt with increasingly idiosyncratic topics, many of them concerned with a search for the origins of modernity in medieval thought. The last book of his that came to my attention was *In the Vineyard of the Text* (1993), a commentary on the twelfth-century writer Hugh of Saint Victor.

There are, I think, two threads that run through Illich's opus from the beginning. There is a radical critique of all aspects of modernity, grounded in a profoundly conservative view of the human condition. And there is a deep respect for what Illich called the "vernacular"—the wisdom of ordinary people and their ways of coping with life.

My first contact with Illich occurred in 1969. He phoned me, opening with the sentence: "This is Ivan Illich. You probably don't know who I am." I assured him that I did know. He told me that he had heard, correctly, that I was planning to spend the summer in Cuernavaca with my family, then added: "Come to CIDOC. We need you." I subsequently understood what he meant. He had read some of my writings on the relation of society and consciousness, and he thought that they contained ideas he could use. The invitation was irresistible. During the following months I lectured at CIDOC to a very responsive audience. Much more important for me was my being part of the ongoing conversation there. It turned out to be a very important period for me, opening up the entire topic of modernization and development, which has occupied me ever since. It also prompted a turn from the theoretical concerns of my early work to much more empirical issues. In my own recollection of this time there is an inextricable linkage between the excitement of new ideas, the powerful impact of the Mexican milieu, and the image of Illich himself—talking, listening, laughing, offering both physical and intellectual hospitality.

Between 1969 and 1972 I spent three summers in Cuernavaca. I started work, with Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner, on a book dealing with modern consciousness (it eventually became *The Homeless Mind* [1973]). Originally this was to be a book coauthored with Illich. The project was aborted, for practical rather than intellectual reasons. But it had become increasingly clear that there were significant differences between his view of things and my own. However much I appreciated many of Illich's criticisms of modern life, I could not agree with his view of education, technology, capitalism, or the role of women. Underlying all these disagreements was a basic one: Illich did not really like modernity; I did, and I do. What is more, as I became more involved with practical policy matters, I came to think that many of Illich's visions of a desirable society were not realizable. In the 1970s I directed a study for the Vienna Institute of Development, a creation of then-Chancellor Bruno Kreisky. In my one conversation with him I mentioned Illich. He responded impatiently: "One cannot use this" ("*Damit kann man nichts anfangen*"). I disputed him but had to admit to myself that I did not really disagree. Still, none of these disagreements affected either my intellectual or personal regard for Illich.

After the mid-1970s our contacts became intermittent. Illich often called me from some airport, announced that he was coming through Boston, and informed me that he would come by the house for a short visit. One time he kept a taxi waiting outside while we talked. Then there was the surreal episode of the migrant scarf. Illich possessed a rare scarf, made from both llama and alpaca hair, which had been given to him by a Peruvian philosopher. Illich called me from New York, telling me that he had forgotten the scarf in the office of his publisher, who was going to mail it to me; he would then pick it up on a forthcoming visit to Boston. Illich arrived, but the scarf did not. Next, he asked me to forward it to Atlanta where, he informed me, he spent every New Year's Eve with the widow of Erich Fromm (Fromm lived in Cuernavaca for a while and had become a friend). The scarf arrived, some days after Illich's visit, and I duly sent it on to Atlanta. But a quick recapitulation of Illich's itinerary made me doubt that the scarf would reach him in Atlanta either. I then had a vision of the scarf following Illich, from continent to continent, never reaching him—a metaphor of unending pilgrimage. (I never did learn where the scarf ended up.)

About two years ago I received a short letter from Illich. He regretted that we had seen so little of each other in recent years and thanked me for having given him some ideas that he had not had before. It read like a goodbye letter. I knew that he had been seriously ill, and I phoned him in Mexico. It was a brief conversa-

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tion. He said that he was quite well, that he was working. Then he added: "I am ready for departure" (we spoke in German—"*abreisebereit*"). May his journey be full of glory.

Peter L. Berger *is Director of the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture at Boston University.*

San Francisco Sacred (II)

Michael Linton

Several times during the San Francisco Opera's (SFO) remarkable production of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* (which I discussed in Part I of this essay last month), Sister Helen is asked if she is afraid. With striking similarity, "*J'ai peur sur la route*!" (I am afraid on the road!) are the first words, sung by the young friar Leo, of Olivier Messiaen's opera *Saint François d'Assise*, which had its first American performance at the SFO in the fall of 2002. Francis comforts Leo with a description of the greatest happiness, of pure joy. Such happiness, he instructs him, lies neither in the most sublime knowledge nor even in the accomplishment of great and pious tasks. Instead it lies in the renunciation of one's self and the cheerful endurance of suffering for the sake of Christ. The road of life, even the painful and frightful road of life, is not to be feared. It is also the radiant path of the cross, blazed by Christ, which leads to joy, to ecstasy eternal.

The ecstasy that twists like a DNA code through every bar of Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise* is a startling repudiation of the angst that lies at the heart of modernism—a high irony since Messiaen was one of the modern era's most singular and innovative musicians. Increasingly, the opera is being recognized as the most important work of the late twentieth century. Certainly not since Bach completed the *St. Matthew Passion* has an artist combined substantive theology with magisterial composition into such a titanic example of artistry. As *New York Times* critic Paul Griffiths wrote, "If music could make us good, this music would."

The Paris Opera commissioned the work in 1975. Messiaen worked on the music and the libretto at the same time, completing the sketched opera in 1979. It took three more years to orchestrate, and the opera premiered in Paris in November 1983. Three years later Seiji Ozawa (who conducted the Paris performances) performed three of the opera's scenes with the Boston Symphony and Tanglewood Festival Chorus in New York and Boston. In 1992 and again in 1998 the complete opera was staged as part of the Salzburg Festival. Berlin presented the opera in the summer of 2000. San Francisco's production in the fall of 2002 was the first staging of the complete work outside of Europe.

The opera is huge (even the score is big; it's in three volumes, each roughly three by two feet). The work demands a greatly expanded orchestra (for instance, Messiaen calls for seven flutes, while Mozart gets along with a mere two), and a huge chorus. The baritone role of St. Francis is comparable in its Herculean demands only to Hans Sachs in Wagner's *Meistersinger* (which is considered the most difficult role in the repertory), and the role of the angel, the opera's only female role, is almost cruelly punishing in its extended high soft passages. The music is at times extraordinary complex, and it demands three to four times the number of rehearsals required for almost any other opera. (When Ozawa first saw the score, he told Messiaen that he thought parts of it were impossible to conduct.)

So it was with considerable daring that general director Pamela Rosenberg chose to begin her first year of leadership of the SFO with this production, and she apparently spared nothing on it. The chorus was tripled in size and extra musicians were added to the orchestra. Platforms were built out into the audience to accommodate the extended percussionists and the players of the three electronic *ondes martenots* (two of which, instruments and performers both, had to be imported from Canada and Europe). Such care was taken with the production and lighting that a full scale mock-up of the set was built to make sure that it would fulfill the SFO's vision of the opera. The production was supported by seminars on Messiaen's music and concerts of his organ and chamber works throughout the Bay Area. The production even included lavish press packets (complete with a CD-ROM) and a program that contained substantial essays on the composer and the opera. This was not a cheap show to mount.

Messiaen's eight scenes (divided between three acts) show Francis' progress toward a "state of supreme grace" (Messiaen's words). The first three scenes broadly deal with earthly themes and encounters (the fear of death, man's relationship with the created order, and the need to love others more than ourselves), while the three scenes of the second act involve man's relationship with the supernatural (the angel appears at the monastery, Francis is given a vision of the "music of the invisible," and he preaches to the birds). The two scenes of the third act—the gift of the stigmata and the saint's death and resurrection—summarize the themes of the first two acts and complete their argu-

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ments. Borrowing a device from Debussy's *Pelleas et Mélisande*, most of Messiaen's scenes contain little, if any, real action. Messiaen's purpose here is not to present a piece of symbolist psychological theater, but instead to present what are almost animated meditations upon points of theology.

The scene that begins Act II is typical. A disguised angel visits the brothers' monastery. He knocks repeatedly on the gate (represented by huge dark and irregular chords in the orchestra). His raps are answered by a young brother who lectures the divine messenger on the etiquette of knocking ("three times, not too loud, wait—as long as it takes to say an 'Our Father'—then you can knock once more"). The angel says that he has come to see Francis. Told that Francis is at his prayers, and not wishing to disturb him, the angel asks to present a question to one of the brothers. Brother Elie, something of the order's chief bookkeeper, appears. "What do you think of predestination?" the angel asks. "Have you put off the old man, to put on the new? Have you found your true face as foreseen by God in His justice, holiness, and truth?" Elie is a busy man, and has no time for such grandiloquent nonsense. He refuses to answer and orders the gate slammed in the strange visitor's face.

Undeterred, the angel knocks again (again loudly—but how else is the messenger of God to announce his advent?) and again is lectured on his bad manners. He asks for Brother Benard to hear his question. The aged friar is brought out, and the angel presents the same question to him. Benard answers, "I have often thought that after my death, our Lord Jesus Christ will look at me as he looked at the tribute-money, saying 'Whose is this image and this inscription?' And, by God and His Grace, I would like to be able to answer him: 'Yours, Yours.'" The angel tells the friar that he has answered well (indeed, it's a response that would probably satisfy both John Calvin and Ignatius Loyola), and encourages him to "persevere in that road."

It is one of the most stunning moments in opera. There is a little comedy, and a bit of action, but the real drama is not on stage. Instead Messiaen places it beyond the orchestra pit, in the heart of each person in the auditorium, the dramatic struggle of that second, unasked question that we almost involuntarily find ourselves asking, "Ah, whose image is on my coin?" No matter what our religious beliefs, in a flash we find before us that inevitable moment of our death, and of our fear, and of our desperate hope that there is a meaning to it all, that there is a God, and that somehow we might be seen as His own. Might we all be able to say "*de Vous, de Vous.*" Yours, Yours.

Messiaen often said that the purpose of his art was to demonstrate the truth of the Catholic faith (although no bigot, neither was Messiaen an ecumenist). For him, an important part of that faith is the recognition of the extravagance of God's love proclaimed by creation. Although John Cage is the composer most closely identified with "natural sounds," Messiaen was actually more deeply influenced by nature—his music more inextricably bound up with nature's actual sounds. This is seen above all in his attitude toward melody and counterpoint.

The greatest problem facing composers in the twentieth century was melody. The innovations of modernism—atonality, serialism, composed forms, aleotoric practices, electronic music, and heightened rhythmic complexity—all generally distracted composers from melodic considerations. But recently, as some composers have shown new interest in the harmonies and forms of nineteenth-century music, interest in melody has also been renewed. Yet almost always these new melodies simply appear as stale imitations of Puccini, Tchaikovsky, and even Rachmaninoff. Certainly melodies must be a significant part of music, but how to write them? How to make them sound fresh?

Messiaen's answer was to invent a new kind of melody based upon bird song. He spent long hours out of doors, voraciously notating and then cataloguing the songs of individual birds (in mock complaint he once said, "You have to get up at four in the morning, walk long distances, and travel in search of new artists!"). The flourishes, leaps, coloratura, and irregular rhythms of these songs became in Messiaen's art ecstatic melodies, emblematic of the pure joy characteristic of redeemed nature.

These melodies permeate Messiaen's score, making *Saint François* perhaps the most purely lyric opera since Bellini. Many times, and particularly when combined with texts, the melodies are presented as extended monodies, carefully controlled so that Messiaen's words can be clearly heard. Some bird songs are paired with specific characters, and appear with their characters as identifying motifs. At other times, dozens of them are laid on top of each other, creating not a rational counterpoint but instead the heady glossolalia of nature. Messiaen's almost pentecostal polyphony not only makes us hear traditional melodies with new ears, it also makes us return to nature and listen to those sounds with a deeper spiritual understanding.

In the San Francisco production, Messiaen's primarily spiritual message is carried over into the set design and staging. The cross, the road, and heaven are themes throughout the opera. The road takes the form of an S-shaped ramp that cuts across an inclined cross that is laid out on the stage. The back of the set is open, the place of heaven. The ramp and the cross revolve, becoming a snowy path, the cell of a hermitage, a cloud, and even a kind of cosmic harp. In the final scene, the ramp becomes Francis' road to heaven. Two multisto-

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ried blank facades (which frequently hold the chorus) look out from the wings, giving the set the ominous look of a De Chiricoesque cityscape. Francis and the friars are costumed in simple gray habits (the chorus is dressed similarly). The prevailing gloom of the design is relieved by the angel who appears one-winged and in a body suit the color of heaven: electric blue. Color is also added by atmospheric projections that appear on scrims and the far wall.

Even San Francisco's staging details reflect sensitivity to Messiaen's purposes. The third scene of the first act is a trio between a leper, Francis, and an angel. Messiaen's leper is deeply bitter. He mocks the brothers who bring him food, and despises himself not only for the rottenness of his flesh but also for the corruption of his character. He pulls along a large glass screen that he continually places between himself and Francis. The angel appears (leaning at a 45-degree angle off the side of one of the blank facades) and sings to the leper of God's love for him. During the course of the scene the angel descends to the leper and gracefully removes the screen.

It may sound contrived, but in the context of the opera the simple staging device of the screen is a powerful and immediately understandable pantomime of the barriers we cultivate to shut out grace. Not only is forgiveness and transformation an act of grace, but even the possibility of forgiveness and healing is itself a divine work. Later in the scene the leper and Francis stand face to face and Francis asks the leper to forgive him for not loving him enough. The saint and the leper embrace and the leper is miraculously healed, but the real miracle is the love that makes healing and transformation possible.

On every level, San Francisco presented a *Saint François* the artistry and thoughtfulness of which can hardly be surpassed. Willard White sang the title role in a commanding and richly nuanced baritone and soprano Laura Aikin's angel was appropriately divine. The orchestra shimmered and sparkled, roared and thundered, while the chorus sang Messiaen's difficult score with a confidence and unified choral tone seldom heard in any work at any opera house. Donald Runnicles, who conducted the San Francisco performances, told the press that he thought this opera was a potentially life-changing experience. It is. And it was.

But San Francisco is one of the world's great opera companies. Great productions there—such as *Dead Man Walking* and *Saint François*—are not particularly newsworthy. What is remarkable about San Francisco's production is the care the house took in presenting not only these new works but also their specifically Christian visions. A production of Heggie's and McNally's work could easily, and legitimately, stress its broadly humanistic elements (although the character of Sister Helen would probably continually pull the drama back into a specifically Christian milieu); the recent Berlin production of *Saint François* purposely subdued Messiaen's overtly Christian content. That San Francisco chose not to take those routes testifies first and foremost to the high integrity of the house toward the works of art it selects to produce. Perhaps it testifies also to a more general shift in cultural sensibility. Maybe there is reason to hope that we are moving to an era where the elements of traditional Western culture will not receive quite the immediate skepticism and ridicule they have elicited since the mid-1960s.

One final word. San Francisco's *Dead Man Walking* and *Saint François d'Assise* were both substantially underwritten by the National Endowment for the Arts. Without the agency's help they probably would not have been mounted. Since I have argued for the termination of the Endowment in these pages ("The Blight of Cultural Rights," June/July 2001), perhaps a measure of contrition is in order—which I gladly offer.

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Retelling the Story of Science

Stephen M. Barr

We often hear of a conflict between religion and science. Is there one? Certainly, some religious beliefs are scientifically untenable: for example, that the world is six thousand years old. However, for Jews and Christians not committed to a narrowly literalistic interpretation of Scripture, that kind of direct and clear-cut contradiction between scientific facts and religious doctrines does not exist.

What many take to be a conflict between religion and science is really something else. It is a conflict between religion and materialism. Materialism regards itself as scientific, and indeed is often called "scientific materialism," even by its opponents, but it has no legitimate claim to be part of science. It is, rather, a school of philosophy, one defined by the belief that nothing exists except matter, or, as Democritus put it, "atoms and the void."

However, there is more to materialism than this cold ontological negation. For many, scientific materialism is not a bloodless philosophy but a passionately held ideology. Indeed, it is the ideology of a great part of the scientific world. Its adherents see science as having a mission that goes beyond the mere investigation of nature or the discovery of physical laws. That mission is to free mankind from superstition in all its forms, and especially in the form of religious belief.

There are two grounds for the materialist's indictment of religion as superstition. First, religion is supernaturalist. It teaches that there is a spiritual realm, and supposedly embraces mythological explanations and magical practices. Second, religion is (in the materialist's eyes) irrationalist, because it is based on dogma, faith, and mystery. Science, being based on the natural and the rational, is therefore held to be fundamentally opposed to religion.

In other words, the scientific materialist maintains that there *is* a conflict between science and religion, and that it is intrinsic and a priori, in the sense that it would exist even if science had not yet made any definite discoveries about the world. This supposed opposition flows from what science and religion are in themselves, from their basic views of reality. However, the materialist claims more than this. He also says that many of the particular discoveries of science have demolished the credibility of religion. He claims, in other words, that there is also an a posteriori conflict between science and religion. This claim is based on a tendentious reading of scientific history, what I shall call the materialist's "Story of Science." According to this story, the great discoveries since the time of Copernicus and Galileo have disclosed a world that looks ever less like the picture religion painted of it, and have forced religious believers to fight a centuries-long rearguard action against the truth. Science has been the great debunker.

The claims of scientific materialism are hardly new. Indeed, they have not changed substantially in over a hundred years. And yet much else has changed in that time. We know much more than we did about the origins of science; we know vastly more about nature. It is a good time, therefore, to take a fresh look at the materialist ideology of science and its story of science to see how well they have held up in the light of new knowledge.

We begin with the issue of supernaturalism in religion and its supposedly superstitious character. I think we would all agree that most forms of belief in the supernatural are superstitious. However, we must remind ourselves of a vital historical fact, which is that

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many of these forms of supernaturalism were attacked, and at least partially overthrown, by biblical religion long before the advent of modern science. The Book of Genesis was itself in large part intended, scholars tell us, as a polemic against pagan superstition. For example, whereas the sun and moon were the objects of worship in pagan religion, the Book of Genesis taught that they were nothing but lamps set in the heavens to give light to day and night: not gods, but mere things, creatures of the one true God. Nor were animals and the forces of nature to be bowed down to by man as in pagan religion; rather man, as a rational being made in the image of God, was to exercise dominion over them.

It is true that the Bible is overwhelmingly supernatural in its outlook and literary atmosphere. However, what is critically important is that the Bible's supernaturalism is concentrated in a God who is outside of Nature, and radically distinguished from the world He has made. Therefore the world of nature is no longer seen as populated by capricious supernatural beings, by fates and furies, dryads and naiads, gods of war or goddesses of sex and fertility. The natural world has been "disenchanted." But whereas many give credit to science for this, the distinction belongs in the first instance to the monotheism of the Bible, which by depersonalizing and desacralizing the natural world helped clear the ground for the eventual emergence of modern science.

The Bible taught, then, that whatever reverence it is proper to have for the sun, or the forces of nature, or living things is due not to any divinity or spirituality that they possess, but to the fact that they are the masterworks of God. The universe thus came to be seen as a great work of engineering. We observe this in the Book of Proverbs, where the divine Wisdom is portrayed as a master craftsman directing the work of creation. And according to the rabbis of old the divine craftsman worked from a plan that was none other than the Torah itself. As they put it, "the Holy One, blessed be He, consulted the Torah when He created the world." The Torah, then, was not merely a Law written in a perishable book, or part of a covenant with the people of Israel. It was an eternal Law in the mind of God which He imposed on the cosmos itself. The Lord says through the prophet Jeremiah: "When I have no covenant with day and night, and have given no laws to heaven and earth, then too will I reject the descendants of Jacob and of my servant David." Psalm 148 tells of the sun, the moon, the stars, and the heavens obeying a divinely given "law, that will not pass away." This emphasis on the lawfulness of the cosmos is found also in the earliest Christian writings. Minucius Felix in the second century wrote:

> If upon entering some home you saw that everything there was well-tended, neat, and decorative, you would believe that some master was in charge of it, and that he was himself much superior to those good things. So too in the home of this world, when you see providence, order, and law in the heavens and on earth, believe that there is a Lord and Author of the universe, more beautiful than the stars themselves and the various parts of the whole world.

Note that these ancient texts do not point to supernatural phenomena or to the miraculous as evidence of God's existence. Neither did St. Paul in the first chapter of Romans, where he discusses the grounds of belief in God. Nor did St. Thomas Aquinas in his famous fivefold proof. Belief in God is not founded upon supernatural manifestations but on the natural order, on the orderliness of things. The role of the miraculous in Judaism and Christianity is quite limited; it is to show God's favor to His people and testify to the authenticity of the oracles of divine revelation, not to ground belief in the Creator.

There is something else that can be observed in these ancient texts, I think, that has some relevance to the long-debated question of Darwin and design. Many seem to have gotten the impression that the old Argument from Design for the existence of God is primarily an argument from biology. Richard Dawkins says, for instance, that it was the discovery by Darwin that biological structure could arise without design that "made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist." However, most of the ancient Jewish and Christian texts seem to emphasize the structure of the cosmos as a whole more than the structure of living things. Jeremiah speaks of the covenant with day and night, and the laws given to heaven and earth; the Psalmist of the law obeyed by the sun, moon, stars, and heavens; and Minucius Felix of the providence, order, and law in the heavens and on earth.

It was in the heavens that the orderliness of nature was most evident to ancient man. It was this celestial order, perhaps, that first inspired in him feelings of religious awe. And it was the study of this order that gave birth to modern science in the seventeenth century. It is not altogether accidental, then, that it was an argument over the motions of the heavenly bodies that occasioned the fateful collision between science and religious authority that will forever be evoked by the name of Galileo. The case of Galileo raises another important historical point about supernaturalism and biblical religion.

Perhaps I can best introduce it with a personal story. I was asked a few years ago to give the response at a conference of scholars to a talk on the teaching of evolution in high schools. In my presentation I quoted the follow-

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ing piece of antireligious propaganda from a currently used high school biology textbook: "Every so often scientists stir up controversy when they explain part of the world that was considered beyond natural explanation—that is, belonging to the 'supernatural.'" I disputed the idea that such controversies arise "every so often," as the textbook asserted. I said that except for the battle over evolution I could think of no significant controversy that fit this description. At that point, as I had expected might happen, several members of the audience shouted out "Galileo!" But they had no reason to, for (as I went on to observe) the Galileo affair was most certainly not a debate about the supernatural. The geocentric theory that the Church in effect endorsed was no more supernatural than the heliocentric theory that it condemned. This was a clash between two perfectly naturalistic theories of astronomy. It was the veracity of Scripture that the Church authorities (mistakenly) saw themselves as upholding, not supernatural explanations of planetary motion over natural ones. (It is true that the inspiration of Scripture is supernatural, and that Galileo's opponents thus thought they had supernatural warrant for believing what they did. But one may believe a natural fact on supernatural authority. I may believe that figs grow on trees or that Pontius Pilate was procurator in Judea because the Bible says so, without thinking that those facts are in any way supernatural in themselves.)

It was the same in physics: what Galileo and Newton overthrew were the erroneous, but perfectly naturalistic, theories of Aristotle. The Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century had to overcome the naturalism of Aristotle, not the supernaturalism of Christianity. Christianity had already embraced naturalism in science five hundred years earlier, when Western Christians first encountered Greek science (or as it was called, natural philosophy) through translations from Greek and Arabic texts. Under the aegis of the Church, natural philosophy became a staple of medieval university education and was even a prerequisite for the study of theology. So comfortable were Christians with a naturalistic conception of the cosmos that it was a cliché already in the twelfth century for theologians and other writers to refer to the cosmos as a "machine."

Now, while biblical religion has something to say about the existence of a natural order (which is simply a corollary of its teaching on God and creation), it has for the most part not regarded itself as having much to say about the detailed workings of that natural order. The materialist's notion that religion is about providing mythological explanations of nature in the absence of real scientific understanding—the "God of the gaps" idea—is, as applied to biblical religion at any rate, itself a piece of mythology. It is instructive to look, for instance, at the Roman Catechism, or Catechism of the Council of Trent, published in 1566, exactly fifty years before Galileo's first run-in with the Roman authorities. It contains not a word about botany, zoology, geology, or astronomy. Those were simply not considered part of Christian doctrine. That was the general attitude of the Catholic Church both before and after the Galileo affair, which can now be recognized as an adventitious and unique event in the history of the Church's relationship with science. It was a bump—admittedly, a very bad bump—in what has otherwise been a smooth road.

It is notable, in this regard, that the Catholic Church never condemned, or even criticized or warned against, the theory of evolution. Its first statement on that subject did not come until 1950, when Pius XII isolated two points concerning evolution as being of doctrinal significance. Both concerned only human evolution. First, he said, the original unity of the human race has to be upheld. And second, whereas the human body might have evolved, the human spiritual soul, not being reducible to matter, cannot be held to have evolved. It was specially created by God in the first human beings as in all subsequent human beings. Here, in this one case, we do see the Church upholding a form of supernaturalism. It is the one great exception to the depersonalizing of nature by Judaism and Christianity. Man himself must not be depersonalized or reduced to the merely natural in the sense of the merely physical. I shall return to this all-important point.

I would like to interject here a comment about what I regard as backsliding from the fundamental Jewish and Christian perspective on nature by some recent theologies. On the one hand, we have some process theologians blurring the distinction between God and the universe, and treating the Godhead itself as part of the cosmic evolutionary process. On the other hand, we have some critics of Darwinism not merely arguing the inadequacy of that theory, but attacking the very idea of naturalism in biology, even when it comes to plants and animals, as inherently unbiblical or irreligious. Although these schools of thought are in some ways opposite, they are equally guilty, it seems to me, of smuggling supernaturalism back where it does not belong, and where neither science nor theology has ever needed it. Some anti-Darwinists need to be reminded that there is a natural order that comes from God, and the process theologians need to understand that God is the author of it, not a part of it.

We turn now to the second reason that the materialist indicts religion as superstitious, namely, its supposed irrationalism. The materialist sees faith and dogma as simply a matter of believing without reason. Religious mystery he imagines to be something dark

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and off-limits, something we are not meant to understand, and indeed beyond all understanding. All of this adds up, in his eyes, to an obscurantism that sets itself against intellectual freedom and the search for truth.

In responding to these misconceptions, I would like to begin with the notion of intellectual freedom. The great physicist Richard Feynman once observed that the freedom of the scientist is quite different from that of the artist or writer. The artist is free to imagine anything he pleases. The imagination of the scientist, however, is chained to experimental facts. The theories he dreams up must conform to what is already known from observation, and must be abandoned, no matter how rationally coherent, beautiful, or compelling they seem, if they are contradicted by new experimental facts. To put it in religious language, the scientist is answerable to a very stern and peremptory magisterium, the magisterium of Nature herself.

There is a clear analogy between the limitations on the scientist and those on the theologian. The scientist must submit his mind to the data of experiment, the theologian must submit his to the data of revelation. The word "data" means "the things that are given." Both the religious person and the scientist accept givens. The givens may perplex. They may seem difficult to bring into harmony with each other or with what is known on other grounds. They may throw all our theories into confusion. But accepting the data must come before progress in understanding. That is why the words of St. Augustine apply, in a way, to the scientist as much as to the theologian: *credo ut intelligam*, "I believe in order that I may understand."

So we see in science something akin to religious faith. The scientist has confidence in the intelligibility of the world. He has questions about nature. And he expects—no, more than expects, he is absolutely convinced—that these questions have intelligible answers. The fact that he must seek those answers proves that they are not in sight. The fact that he continues to seek them in spite of all difficulties testifies to his unconquerable conviction that those answers, although not presently in sight, do in fact exist. Truly, the scientist too walks by faith and not by sight.

The scientist is convinced that there are certain acts of insight, which he has not yet achieved, and which indeed no human being may ever achieve, that would satisfy a rational mind on the questions he has raised about nature. Faith in God is an extension of this attitude. The believer in God is convinced that reality is intelligible, not merely on this or that point, but through and through. There is some all-embracing act of insight that would satisfy all questioning and leave no further questions to be asked. Such an infinite and perfect act of insight is the state of being of God, indeed for the Christian and Jew it *is* God. In the words of the Jesuit philosopher Bernard Lonergan, God is the "unrestricted act of understanding" that grasps all of reality, all of being.

The materialist imagines that a religious mystery is something too dark to be seen. But, as G. K. Chesterton noted, it is really something too bright to be seen, like the sun. As Scripture tells us, God "dwells in unapproachable light." The mystery is not impenetrable to intellect or unintelligible *in itself*; rather, it is not fully intelligible *to us*. And reason itself tells us that there must be such mysteries. For the nature of God is infinite, and therefore not proportionate to our finite minds. The mysteries of the faith primarily concern the nature of God, or they concern man in his relationship to God and as the image of God. They concern, that is, what is infinite or touches upon the infinite. Consequently, religious mystery hardly concerns, if it concerns at all, the matters studied by the physicist, chemist, or botanist. The things they study are quite finite in their natures and therefore quite proportionate to the human intellect. That is why there is nothing in Jewish or Christian belief that implies or suggests any limit to what human beings can understand about the structure of the physical world. Although the writings of scientific materialists are filled with hostility toward religious mystery, in fact religious mystery has never acted as a brake upon scientific progress.

This brings us back to the question of supernaturalism and its proper place. Supernaturalism is out of place in physics, astronomy, chemistry, or botany. However, it is necessary in anything that touches upon the nature of man, for man is made in the image of God. I have noted that biblical religion opposed the supernaturalism of the ancient pagan. In doing so, it clearly served the cause of reason. In our time, biblical religion serves the cause of reason just as much by opposing the absolute naturalism of the modern materialist. Where the ancient pagan went wrong is in seeing the supernatural everywhere in the world around him. Where the modern materialist goes wrong is in failing to see that which goes beyond physical nature in himself. By extending naturalism even to his own mind and soul, the materialist ends up sliding into his own morass of irrationalism and superstition. How so?

In the first place, a purely materialistic conception of man cannot account for the human power of reason itself. If we are just "a pack of neurons," in the words of Sir Francis Crick, if our mental life is nothing but electrical impulses in our nervous system, then one cannot explain the realm of abstract concepts, including those of theoretical science. Nor can one explain the human mind's openness to truth, which is the foundation of all science. As Chesterton observed, the materialist cannot

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explain "why anything should go right, even observation and deduction. Why good logic should not be as misleading as bad logic, if they are both movements in the brain of a bewildered ape." Scientific materialism exalts human reason, but cannot account for human reason.

Nor can materialism account for many other aspects of the human mind, such as consciousness, free will, and the very existence of a unitary self. In a purely material world such things cannot exist. Matter cannot be free. Matter cannot have a self. The materialist is thus driven to deny empirical facts—not the facts in front of his eyes, but, as it were, the facts behind his eyes: facts about his own mental life. He calls them illusions, or redefines them to be what they are not. In lowering himself to the level of the animal or the machine, the materialist ultimately denies his own status as a rational being, by reducing all his mental operations to instinct and programming.

Thus, like the pagan of old, the materialist ends up subjecting man to the subhuman. The pagan supernaturalist did so by raising the merely material to the level of spirit or the divine. The materialist does so by lowering what is truly spiritual or in the divine image to the level of matter. The results are much the same. The pagan said that his actions were controlled by the orbits of the planets and stars, the materialist says they are controlled by the orbits of the electrons in his brain. The pagan bowed down to animals or the likenesses of animals in worship, the materialist avers that he himself is no more than an animal. The pagan spoke of fate, the materialist speaks of physical determinism.

Pope John Paul II has said that divine revelation reveals not only God to man but man to himself. It reveals to man that he is made in the image of God and therefore endowed with the spiritual powers of rational intellect and free will. Thus the supernaturalism of religion with regard to man is not an attack upon human reason, but ultimately the only basis upon which human reason can be adequately defended.

Up to this point I have been discussing the materialist's claim that religion and science are intrinsically opposed because religion is incompatible with scientific naturalism and rationality. I now turn to the materialist's other claim, that the actual discoveries of science since Copernicus have rendered the religious conception of the world incredible.

This is what I call the materialist's Story of Science. It pervades the atmosphere of the scientific world and of popular writing on science. Let me now briefly outline that story. It has five major themes.

The first theme is the overturning of the religious cosmology—the Copernican theme. We now know that we do not live at the center of a cozy little cosmos, but in what Bertrand Russell called a "backwater" of a vast universe. The earth is a tiny planet, orbiting an insignificant star, near the edge of an ordinary galaxy that contains a hundred billion other stars, in a universe with more than a hundred billion other galaxies.

The second theme is the triumph of mechanism over teleology. The biblical religions did have the concept of a natural order, but they saw that order as embodying purpose. The arrangement of the world and the processes of nature they saw as being directed toward beneficent ends. That is why Christianity had little difficulty in accepting the naturalistic science of Aristotle, which was based on final causes. However, the Scientific Revolution occurred when it was realized that final causes could be dispensed with altogether in physics and that phenomena could be adequately explained in a completely mechanistic way in terms of preceding physical events. Even in biology, apparent purpose is now thought to arise from the undirected mechanism of natural selection acting on random genetic mutations. The materialist argues that the disappearance of purpose from nature undercuts the idea that nature is designed.

These first two themes blend together to give the third theme of the story, what the late Stephen Jay Gould called the "dethronement of man." With the earth but an infinitesimal speck of flotsam in the limitless ocean of space, and the human race but a chemical accident, we can no longer believe ourselves to be the uniquely important beings for whom the universe was created.

The fourth theme, which goes back to Newton, is the discovery of physical determinism. The laws of nature were discovered to form a closed and complete system of cause and effect. Every event could be understood as arising inevitably from the past state of the universe in a way that is precisely determined by the mathematical laws of physics. As Laplace said in the eighteenth century, if the state of the world were completely known at one time, its whole future development could in principle be calculated down to the minutest detail. If this is true, it spells the death of the Jewish and Christian doctrine of free will. For even if we had wills that were free, they could have no effect upon the world of matter, including our bodily organs. They could not affect, in particular, what we say or do.

This leads to the fifth and final theme of the materialist's story, the emergence of a completely mechanistic view of man himself. Already in the seventeenth century the possibility was widely discussed that animals could be understood as machines or automata. The more radical thinkers of the Enlightenment, like La Mettrie and Baron d'Holbach, extended this view to man. Now, with the processes of life understood in terms of chemistry, and the brain understood to be a complex biochemical

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computer, the triumph of this mechanistic view of man seems virtually complete.

The story that I have just outlined should not be lightly dismissed. There are many people, not all of them hostile to religion, who find this interpretation of scientific history not only plausible but compelling. And it must be admitted that, in part, this is because much in scientific history up through the nineteenth century lent itself to this interpretation, or seemed to. And the startling developments in physics in the twentieth century only reinforced this view of things. People saw dramatic discoveries, like Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum theory, as demonstrating once again that all traditional or familiar or intuitively obvious notions are naive and fated to be cast aside. Science as debunker, it seemed, was continuing on its relentless course.

However, this view of twentieth-century science is misleading. It is true that science debunked many ideas in the twentieth century, but what it chiefly debunked, I will now argue, was the materialist's old Story of Science. This was not fully appreciated, because people saw what they expected to see. They extrapolated from the past story line. But the discoveries of the twentieth century threw some twists into the plot. Those twists have, in my view, invalidated, or at least called into serious question, every lesson that the materialist wished us to draw from scientific history.

What are those twentieth-century plot twists? There are, it so happens, five of them, which correspond rather closely to the five themes of the materialist's story of science.

We recall that the first theme of that story was the Copernican one, the overthrow of the religious cosmology, and in particular of the supposedly religious idea that man is at the center of the universe. I say supposedly religious idea, because in historical fact the notion that the universe has a center entered Western thought not from the Bible, which knows no such idea, but from Ptolemy and Aristotle. However, there was a question about the structure of the cosmos that historically really did divide Jews and Christians from materialists and pagans. That question was not about space and whether it has a center, it was about time and whether it had a beginning.

The idea that the universe and time itself had a beginning really did enter Western thought from the Bible, and indeed from the opening words of the Bible. Virtually all the pagan philosophers of antiquity, including Aristotle, and, according to most scholars, Plato, held that time had no beginning. Modern materialists and atheists, for obvious reasons, have generally followed the ancient pagan view.

For a very long time, all the indications from science seemed to tell against the idea of a beginning. In Newtonian physics it was natural to assume that both time and space were boundless and infinite in extent. The simplest assumption was that time coordinates, like space coordinates, extended from minus infinity to plus infinity. The discovery of the law of conservation of energy gave further support to the idea of the eternity of the world, for it said that energy could be neither created nor destroyed. And chemists discovered that the quantity of matter, as measured by its mass, is also unchanged in physical processes. Thus almost every scientific indication at the beginning of the twentieth century was that space, time, matter, and energy had always existed and always would. One more nail in the coffin of religion, it would seem. But then came the first plot twist.

The first intimation that time could have had a beginning came from Einstein's General Theory of Relativity—that is, his theory of gravity. In the 1920s, the Russian mathematician Alexander Friedmann and the Belgian physicist Georges Lemaître (who was also a Catholic priest) independently proposed mathematical models of the universe, based on Einstein's theory, in which the universe is expanding from some initial explosion, which Lemaître called the "primeval atom," and which is now called the "Big Bang." Observational evidence for this cosmic expansion was announced a few years later, in 1929, by the American astronomers Edwin Hubble and Milton Humason.

The initial reaction of some scientists to the idea of a beginning was extremely negative. The eminent German physicist Walter Nernst declared, "To deny the infinite duration of time would be to betray the very foundations of science." As late as 1959, thirty years after the discovery of the expansion of the universe, a survey of leading American astronomers and physicists showed that most still believed that the universe had no beginning. Not all, but certainly some, of the resistance to the idea of a beginning can be attributed to materialist prejudice.

None of this is to say that the Big Bang proves the biblical doctrine of creation, or even that it proves conclusively that time had a beginning. It is possible that something existed before the Big Bang, even though in the simplest and currently standard model of cosmology nothing did. Nevertheless, it remains true that on the one question of cosmology where Jewish and Christian doctrine really did have something to say that conflicted with the expectations of materialists and atheists—the question of a beginning—the evidence as it now stands seems strongly to favor the religious conception.

The second theme of the materialist's story was the triumph of mechanism over teleology. Instead of seeing purpose in nature, and thus a Person behind the purpose, science came to see only the operation of

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impersonal laws. There was no need for a cosmic designer, for it was the laws of physics that shaped and sculpted the world in which we live. When Laplace was asked by Napoleon why God was never mentioned in his great treatise on celestial mechanics, Laplace famously answered, "I had no need of that hypothesis." This revealed a shift in perspective. Whereas once the laws of nature had been seen as pointing to a lawgiver, they were now seen by some as constituting in themselves, and by themselves, a sufficient explanation of reality. This brings us to the second plot twist in the story of science. In the twentieth century another shift in perspective took place. One might call it the aesthetic turn. This requires some explanation.

Physics begins with phenomena that can be observed with the senses, perhaps aided by simple instruments, like telescopes. It finds regularities in those phenomena and seeks mathematical rules that accurately describe them. Physicists call such rules empirical formulas or phenomenological laws. At a later stage, these rules are found to follow from some deeper and more general laws, which usually require more abstract and abstruse mathematics to express them. Underlying these, in turn, are found yet more fundamental laws. As this deepening has occurred, two things have happened. First, there has been an increasing unification of physics. Whereas, in the early days of science, nature seemed to be a potpourri of many kinds of phenomena with little apparent relation, such as heat, sound, magnetism, and gravity, it later became clear that there were deep connections. This trend toward unification greatly accelerated throughout the twentieth century, until we now have begun to discern that the laws of physics make up a single harmonious mathematical system.

Second, physicists began to look not only at the surface physical effects, but increasingly at the form of the deep laws that underlie them. They began to notice that those laws exhibit a great richness and profundity of mathematical structure, and that they are, indeed, remarkably beautiful and elegant from the mathematical point of view. As time went on, the search for new theories became guided not only by detailed fitting of experimental data, but by aesthetic criteria. A classic example of this was the discovery of the Dirac Equation in 1928. Paul Dirac was looking for an equation to describe electrons that was consistent with both relativity and quantum theory. He hit upon a piece of mathematics that struck him as "pretty." "[It] was a pretty mathematical result," he said. "I was quite excited over it. It seemed that it must be of some importance." This led him to the discovery that has been justly described as among the highest achievements of twentieth-century science.

The same quest for mathematical beauty dominates the search for fundamental theories today. One of the leading theoretical particle physicists in the world today, Edward Witten, trying to explain to a skeptical science reporter why he believed in superstring theory in spite of the dearth of experimental evidence for it, said, "I don't think I've succeeded in conveying to you its wonder, incredible consistency, remarkable elegance, and beauty."

All of this has changed the context in which we think about design in nature. When the questions physicists asked were simply about particular sensible phenomena, like stars, rainbows, or crystals, it may have seemed out of place to talk about them, however beautiful they were, as being fashioned by the hand of God. They could be accounted for satisfactorily by the laws of physics. But now, when it is the laws of physics themselves that are the object of curiosity and aesthetic appreciation, and when it has been found that they form a single magnificent edifice of great subtlety, harmony, and beauty, the question of a cosmic designer seems no longer irrelevant, but inescapable.

In 1931, Hermann Weyl, one of the great mathematicians and physicists of the twentieth century, gave a lecture at Yale University in which he said the following:

> Many people think that modern science is far removed from God. I find, on the contrary, that it is much more difficult today for the knowing person to approach God from history, from the spiritual side of the world, and from morals; for there we encounter the suffering and evil in the world, which it is difficult to bring into harmony with an all-merciful and almighty God. In this domain we have evidently not yet succeeded in raising the veil with which our human nature covers the essence of things. But in our knowledge of physical nature we have penetrated so far that we can obtain a vision of the flawless harmony which is in conformity with sublime reason.

The third theme of the materialist's story was the "dethronement of man." A classic statement of this view was given by Steven Weinberg in his book *The First Three Minutes*. He wrote:

> It is almost irresistible for humans to believe that we have some special relation to the universe, that human life is not just a farcical outcome of a chain of accidents, . . . but that we were somehow built in from the beginning. . . . It is very hard for us to realize that [the entire earth] is just a tiny part of an overwhelmingly hostile universe. . . . The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless.

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Certainly, given the immensity of the universe and the impact of Darwinian ideas, it is easy to understand why this sentiment is widespread. However, in the last few decades there has been a development that suggests a very different estimate of man's place in the universe. This plot twist was not a single discovery, but the noticing of many facts about the laws of nature that all seem to point in the same direction. These facts are sometimes called "anthropic coincidences."

The term "anthropic coincidence" refers to some feature of the laws of physics that seems to be just what is needed for life to be able to evolve. In other words, it is a feature whose lack or minute alteration would have rendered the universe sterile. Some of these features have been known for a long time. For example, William Paley, already in 1802, in his treatise *Natural Theology*, pointed out that if the law of gravity had not been a so-called "inverse square law" then the earth and the other planets would not be able to remain in stable orbits around the sun. Perhaps the most famous anthropic coincidence was discovered in the 1930s, when it was found that except for a certain very precise relationship satisfied by the energy levels of the Carbon-12 nucleus, most of the chemical elements in nature would have occurred in only very minute quantities, greatly dimming the prospects of life.

Interest in and attention to anthropic coincidences has greatly intensified since the work of the astrophysicist Brandon Carter in the 1970s. Many such coincidences have now been identified. The most natural interpretation of them is that we were indeed "built in from the beginning," in Steven Weinberg's phrase, and that the universe, far from being "overwhelmingly hostile" to us, as he asserted, is actually amazingly, gratuitously hospitable.

Most scientists take a very jaundiced view of the whole subject of anthropic coincidences. They have some respectable reasons, but the major reason, in my experience, is a knee-jerk reaction against anything that smells like religion or teleology. Moreover, those well-known scientists who have shown interest in anthropic coincidences generally see them as having an explanation that does not invoke purpose in nature. They appeal to what is sometimes called the Weak Anthropic Principle. This is the idea that a variety of different laws of physics apply in different regions of the universe, or even in different universes, and that so many possible laws of physics are sampled in this way that there is really no coincidence in the fact that in some places the laws are "just right" for life. This is a very speculative idea, and as an explanation of all the anthropic coincidences it faces formidable difficulties. However, it cautions us that the anthropic coincidences may not point unambiguously to cosmic purpose. Yet these coincidences do completely vitiate the claim that science has shown life and man to be mere accidents. If anything, the prima facie evidence is in favor of the biblical idea that the universe was made with life and man in mind.

The fourth theme of the materialist's story was the determinism of physical law. Everything in the history of physics up until the last century seemed to support this idea. All the laws discovered—those of mechanics, gravity, and electromagnetism—were deterministic in character. If anything seemed securely established it was physical determinism. However, in the 1920s the ground rumbled under the feet of physicists. Determinism was swept away in the quantum revolution. According to the principles of quantum theory, even complete information about the state of a physical system at one time does not determine its future behavior, except in a probabilistic sense.

This was terribly shocking to physicists. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of an exact science is its ability to predict outcomes. So shocking was this twist in the plot that several of the makers of the quantum revolution, including de Broglie and Schrödinger, were reluctant to accept this aspect of it. Einstein was never reconciled to the loss of determinism. "God," he famously said, "does not play dice." There have been many attempts to restore determinism to physics by modifying, reformulating, or reinterpreting quantum theory in some way. So far, however, it seems unlikely that the old classical determinism will be restored.

There are many who argue, nonetheless, that the indeterminacy of quantum theory does not create an opening or a space for free will to operate. They argue that the basic building blocks of the human brain, such as neurons, are too large for quantum indeterminacy to play a significant role. At this point, who can say? So little is known about the brain. What we can say is that there was for a long time a strong argument from the fundamental character of physical law against the possibility of free will, and this argument can no longer be so simply made. To quote Hermann Weyl again, from the same 1931 lecture:

> We may say that there exists a world, causally closed and determined by precise laws, but . . . the new insight which modern [quantum] physics affords . . . opens several ways of reconciling personal freedom with natural law. It would be premature, however, to propose a definite and complete solution of the problem. . . . We must await the further development of science, perhaps for centuries, perhaps for thousands of years, before we can design a true and detailed picture of the interwoven texture of Matter, Life, and Soul. But the old classical

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> determinism of Hobbes and Laplace need not oppress us longer.

We return, now, to the final theme of the materialist's story, the mechanistic view of man himself. It is the final theme in more ways than one. Here the scientist debunks himself. Here all the grand intellectual adventure of science ends with the statement that there is no intellectual adventure. For the mind of man has looked into itself and seen nothing there except complex chemistry, nerve impulses, and synapses firing. That, at least, is what the materialist tells us that science has seen. However, the story is really not so simple. Here again the plot has twisted. Two of the greatest discoveries of the twentieth century cast considerable doubt upon, and some would say refute, the contention that the mind of man can be explained as a mere biochemical machine.

The first of these discoveries is quantum theory. In the traditional interpretation of quantum theory—sometimes also called the "Copenhagen," "standard," or "orthodox" interpretation—one must, to avoid paradoxes or absurdities, posit the existence of so-called "observers" who lie, at least in part, outside of the description of the world provided by physics. That is, the mathematical formalism which quantum theory uses to make predictions about the physical world cannot be stretched to cover completely the person who is observing that world. What is it about the "observer" that lies beyond physical description? Careful analysis suggests that it is some aspect of his rational mind.

This has led some eminent physicists to say that quantum theory is inconsistent with a materialistic view of the human mind. Eugene Wigner, a Nobel laureate in physics, stated flatly that materialism is not "logically consistent with present quantum mechanics." Sir Rudolf Peierls, another leading twentieth-century physicist, said, on the basis of quantum theory, "The premise that you can describe in terms of physics the whole function of a human being . . . including its knowledge, and its consciousness, is untenable. There is still something missing."

Admittedly, this is a highly controversial view. That is only to be expected, especially given the materialist prejudice that affects a large part of the scientific community. Moreover, the traditional interpretation of quantum theory has aspects that many find disturbing or implausible. Some even think (wrongly, in my opinion) that the role it assigns to observers leads to subjectivism or philosophical idealism. Dissatisfaction with the traditional interpretation has led to various rival interpretations and to attempts to modify quantum theory. However, these other ideas are equally controversial. The controversy over quantum theory will not be resolved any time soon, or perhaps ever. But, even if it is not, the fact will remain that there is an argument against materialism that comes from physics itself, an argument that has been advanced and defended by some leading physicists and never refuted.

The second discovery that arguably points to something nonmaterial in man is a revolutionary theorem in mathematical logic proved in 1931 by the Austrian Kurt Gödel, one of the greatest mathematicians of modern times. Gödel's Theorem concerns the inherent limitations of what are called "formal systems." Formal systems are essentially systems of symbolic manipulation. Since computers are basically just machines for doing such symbolic manipulations, Gödel's Theorem has great relevance to what computers and computer programs can do. It was recognized fairly quickly that Gödel's Theorem might have something to say about whether the human mind is just a computer—Gödel himself was firmly convinced that it is not. Indeed, he called materialism "a prejudice of our time." However, he never developed, at least in print, the argument against materialism based on his own theorem. That was first done by the Oxford philosopher John R. Lucas. In 1961, Lucas wrote,

> Gödel's theorem seems to me to prove that Mechanism is false, that is, that minds cannot be explained as machines. So has it seemed to many other people: almost every mathematical logician I have put the matter to has confessed similar thoughts, but has felt reluctant to commit himself definitely until he could see the whole argument set out, with all objections fully stated and properly met. This I attempt to do.

Both Gödel's Theorem and Lucas' argument are extremely subtle, but we can state the gist of them as follows. Gödel's Theorem implies that a computer program can be outwitted by someone who understands how it is put together. Lucas observed that if a man were *himself* a computer program, then by knowing how his own program was put together he could outwit himself, which is a contradiction. One may explain the Lucas argument in another way. Gödel's Theorem also showed that it is beyond the power of any computer program that operates by logically consistent rules to tell that it is doing so. However, a human being, Lucas noted, *can* recognize his own consistency—at least at times—and so must be more than a mere computer.

In recent years, the eminent mathematician and mathematical physicist Sir Roger Penrose has taken up the Lucas argument, further refined it, and answered criticisms that had been leveled at it by mathematicians and philosophers. This has not quieted the criticism.

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However, the Gödelian argument of Lucas and Penrose, though often attacked, has never been refuted.

Where does this all leave us? After all the twists and turns of scientific history we look around and find ourselves in very familiar surroundings. We find ourselves in a universe that seems to have had a beginning. We find it governed by laws that have a grandeur and sublimity that bespeak design. We find many indications in those laws that we were built in from the beginning. We find that physical determinism is wrong. And we find that the deepest discoveries of modern physics and mathematics give hints, if not proof, that the mind of man has something about it that lies beyond the power of either physics or mathematics to describe.

Chesterton told the story of "an English yachtsman who slightly miscalculated his course and discovered England under the impression that it was an island in the South Seas." The explorer, he said, "landed (armed to the teeth and speaking by signs) to plant the British flag on that barbaric temple which turned out to be the pavilion at Brighton." Having braced himself to discover New South Wales, he realized, "with a gush of happy tears, that it was really old South Wales."

Science has taken us on just such an adventure. Armed not with weapons but with telescopes and particle accelerators, and speaking by the signs and symbols of recondite mathematics, it has brought us to many strange shores and shown us alien and fantastic landscapes. But as we scan the horizon, near the end of the voyage, we have begun to recognize first one and then another of the old familiar landmarks and outlines of our ancestral home. The search for truth always leads us, in the end, back to God. FT

Hercules' Eighth Labor: The Man-Eating Mares of Diomedes

Imagine the way those horses came
plunging and foaming like a race
undammed, and how the hot hooves crashing
scoured down the hills of Thrace.

Fed by an unheard-of hunger—
roaring white-eyed from their source,
they ate the mountain like a river
ravening out a watercourse.

He made them stand, slow-eyed and tame,
and, two by two, across the plains,
he led in glory back to Greece
those horses never meant for reins.

Deborah Warren

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The Communion of Saints

I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

—John 17

We believe in the communion of saints.

—Apostles' Creed

This statement on the communion of saints (*communio sanctorum*) is part of the ongoing project known as Evangelicals and Catholics Together, commonly called ECT. The project began in 1992 with a conference occasioned by growing and often violent conflicts between Catholics and evangelical Protestants in Latin America. In March 1994 we issued a statement, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium." In that statement we explained why it is necessary for us, as "brothers and sisters in Christ," to work with one another, and not against one another, in the great task of evangelization, and to support one another in facing up to the ominous moral, cultural, and spiritual threats of our time. The signers of the statement pledged themselves to such Christian solidarity and, while this initiative has not been without its critics, both Evangelical and Catholic, we are greatly heartened by the thousands who have joined in that pledge, both in this country and in other parts of the world.

Such solidarity, if it is to be true and enduring, must be grounded in nothing less than the gospel of Jesus Christ. This has been an insistent theme of ECT, reaffirmed every step of the way: the only unity that is pleasing to God, and therefore the only unity we can seek, is unity in the Truth. This theme was deepened and exemplified in the 1997 statement, "The Gift of Salvation." In that statement we together affirmed the way in which we understand justification by faith alone as a gift received by God's grace alone because of Christ alone. In that statement, we were able to say together:

> We agree that justification is not earned by any good works or merits of our own; it is entirely God's gift, conferred through the Father's sheer graciousness, out of the love that He bears us in His Son, who suffered on our behalf and rose from the dead for our justification. . . . The New Testament makes it clear that the gift of justification is received through faith. "By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). By faith, which is also the gift of God, we repent of our sins and freely adhere to the gospel, the good news of God's saving work for us in Christ. By our response of faith to Christ, we enter into the blessings promised by the gospel. Faith is not merely intellectual assent but an act of the whole person, involving the mind, the will, and the affections, issuing in a changed life. We understand that what we here affirm is in agreement with what the Reformation traditions have meant by justification by faith alone (*sola fide*).

At every step along the way, we have also noted carefully the questions on which, as Evangelicals and Catholics, we continue to disagree. On the long list of what might be called traditional disagreements between evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics is the relationship between Scripture and tradition. In fact, there are few disagreements on the list that have been more agitated over the centuries. The disagreement is often posed in a way that calls for a stark choice between

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Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*), on the one hand, or Scripture and authoritative tradition, on the other. In "Your Word is Truth," our statement issued in 2002, we were able to say together:

> There always have been, and likely will be until our Lord returns in glory, disputes and disagreements about how rightly to discern the teaching of the Word of God in Holy Scripture. We affirm that Scripture is to be read in company with the community of faith past and present. Individual ideas of what the Bible means must be brought to the bar of discussion and assessment by the wider fellowship. "The church of the living God is the pillar and bulwark of truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). Because Christ's Church is the pillar and bulwark of truth, in disputes over conflicting interpretations of the Word of God the Church must be capable of discerning true teaching and setting it forth with clarity.

Each of the above statements is the result of intensive prayer, study, and uncompromisingly candid discussion among the Evangelicals and Catholics involved. In each statement we carefully note that we have not resolved all our differences on the subjects addressed, and it should be evident that we resolutely reject any thought of evading such differences. We believe, however, that these statements go a long way toward creating greater mutual understanding and recasting old disputes in new and promising ways.

We understand Evangelicals and Catholics Together as a work in progress. We are convinced that this is a work of the Holy Spirit. This work was underway long before ECT was begun. In recent decades, Evangelicals and Catholics have encountered one another as brothers and sisters in Christ in many forums, and especially as they contend together for a culture of life that will protect the unborn, the aged, the handicapped, and others who are often deemed to be expendable. These encounters and the patterns of cooperation they have produced are aptly described as "the ecumenism of the trenches." ECT can be understood as making explicit what was implicit: that our unity in action is the fruit of our unity in faith. Our unity in action and in faith is by no means perfect. If this is the work of the Holy Spirit, as we firmly believe, it will continue long after the present participants in ECT have departed this life. We do not know how or when, but we do believe that the prayer of our Lord in John 17 will be answered, that his disciples will be one in a way that the world will see and will believe that he was sent by the Father.

Moreover, our historical circumstance makes our common witness increasingly urgent. Our circumstance is one of unremitting conflict between distinct and antithetical worldviews, or understandings of reality. Evangelicals and Catholics together share, and must together contend for, the Christian worldview. Whatever differences there have been between us in the past, and whatever differences persist still today, we stand side by side in contending for the truth of that understanding of reality. Such solidarity in opposition to the forces of unbelief is aptly called cobelligerency, and such cobelligerency is the more solid as it is more firmly grounded in the Bible, the creeds, and our confession and worship of Jesus Christ as Lord. With this statement and related undertakings, we seek to deepen our understanding of the common faith that binds us so that we might more effectively address the common tasks that claim us.

A century ago, the noted Protestant leader Abraham Kuyper recognized that the common defense of a Christian worldview made necessary precisely the kind of effort in which we are today engaged. Kuyper argued that, when we understand Christianity also as a worldview, we "might be enabled once more to take our stand by the side of Romanism in opposition to modern pantheism." In a similar way, Catholic teaching today, as notably set forth by John Paul II, strongly encourages the fullest possible cooperation among Christians in contending for a culture of life and of truth against the encroaching culture of death and deceit. If then anyone asks about the purpose of this statement and of the ongoing project of which it is part, the answer is clear: it is to evangelize more effectively, to bear witness to the world that Jesus is the Lord and Savior sent by the Father, and to bring that truth to bear on every dimension of life—just as we are commanded to do.

It must be added that ECT is an unofficial initiative. We speak from and to the communities of which we are part, but we do not presume to speak for them. We wholeheartedly support the several official theological dialogues between Evangelicals and Catholics. ECT is an ancillary initiative, serving as a kind of advance scouting party to explore possibilities, and, as such, has received much appreciated encouragement from many sources, both Evangelical and Catholic. We have no illusions that the centuries-long wounds of our divisions will be quickly or easily healed. We are convinced that ECT is part of a project that is God's before it is ours, and is only ours because it is God's. We offer this statement on the *communio sanctorum* in the spirit of the concluding words of our first statement in 1994: "This is a time of opportunity—and, if of opportunity then of responsibility—for Evangelicals and Catholics to be Christians together in a way that helps prepare the world for the coming of Him to whom belongs the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

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Introduction

There is, as we have noted, a definite sequence in the continuing conversation that is Evangelicals and Catholics Together. In the first round of conversation, we affirmed that, despite serious disagreements, we who recognize one another as brothers and sisters in Christ are called to the missionary task of proclaiming his lordship to the world. Acknowledging that we are together in Christ, we then turned in the second round to address justification as the way in which we come to share in the life of Christ. In the third round, we explored our understanding of the word of God and found ourselves in agreement that Holy Scripture, faithfully interpreted in the community of believers, is the divinely given rule by which we are to understand our life and mission in obedience to Christ. In the present statement, we examine more closely the nature of our life together. Our life together is communion in the *communio* of the life of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Evangelicals and Catholics both confess the Apostles' Creed, which speaks of the *communio sanctorum.* In this statement, we address four aspects of that article of faith. First, we look to God as the one who is holy in Himself and in whose trinitarian communion we must participate in order to be holy. Second, we examine the relationship of communion among all those to whom God has imparted a share in His holiness. Third, we discuss our participation in sacraments or holy ordinances, which are means of manifesting and fostering the communion that we share. Finally, we reflect on the communion that we now share with those Christians who have gone before us, including those who have exemplified to an exceptional degree the fidelity to which we are all called, whom many Christians honor with the special title of "saint."

I

God declared to Israel and declares to us, "I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45). The theme of God's holiness permeates the entire Bible. The holiness of God is the mystery of His ineffable being manifested to us as His glory, which includes His righteous and merciful acts to which we are to conform our own lives. The holiness of God is given classic expression in the *trisagion* of Isaiah 6 where the seraphim cry out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." The threefold holiness of God expressed in this passage is understood by Christians as reflecting the life of the Holy Trinity.

All human beings are called to participate in the holiness of God. The life of Christians who, by the grace of God, have responded to that call is to be a life of holiness, which is to say a life of sanctification. Paul writes to his converts in Thessalonica and to us, "This is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Although our communion with God is impeded by sin, which repeatedly alienates us from Him, we are able to be reconciled through Jesus Christ who prayed to the Father, "For their sake I sanctify myself, that they may be sanctified in truth" (John 17:19). To be holy is to participate in the holiness of Jesus who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). The communion of saints signifies, first of all, communion, through Christ and in the power of the Spirit, with God the all-holy.

II

Holiness necessarily entails relationships. In the *communio sanctorum,* one cannot be in communion alone. Holiness is, first of all, a relationship with God in Jesus Christ, the mediator of all holiness. Such a relationship is necessarily communal, for God's own holiness is being in communion, namely, the communion of Father, Son, and Spirit dwelling together in love. To enter into fellowship with God is to enter into fellowship with all who share in the fellowship of God (1 John 1:3). To be in Christ is to be one with all who are in Christ. Our Lord prayed that those who believe in him "may all be one, even as you, Father, are in me and I in you, . . . so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21). Jesus speaks of the union between himself and the Father as a mutual indwelling that is to be extended by his and the Father's indwelling in the community of believers. So intimate is the union and so inseparable is the bond between Jesus and his disciples that those who persecute them are persecuting him, as is evident in his words to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:4). Similarly, those who are merciful to his disciples will be rewarded for having shown mercy to Christ himself (Matthew 10:42, 25:34-40).

We Evangelicals and Catholics do not now live out together the fullness of the unity for which Christ prayed. Yet we do not lack blessings of unity in the body of Christ, which includes the vast company of believers of all times and places, from Abel the righteous one until our Lord's return in glory (Hebrews 11). Our task is not to create unity in Christ, but to give full and faithful expression to the unity that is his present gift. Our union with Christ and with one another is never complete in this life, but it can be intensified and strengthened as we together draw closer to him and to one another. In the body of Christ, we strengthen one another by our strengths, even as we weaken one another by our weaknesses. "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Corinthians 12:26).

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To give expression to and thus to strengthen the fellowship that is already ours, we can and should, despite our different ecclesial allegiances, do many things together. We can gather to listen to the word of God, responding in prayer, worship, and thanksgiving, together with the whole company of heaven. We can together pray for the many good things that God moves us to desire, and for protection against the evils we rightly fear. Thus do we fulfill the prayer of Paul: "May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:5-6). More particularly, together and in our separate gatherings, we should pray for one another. As Paul relied on the prayers of his fellow Christians (2 Corinthians 1:10-11), so we benefit from our prayers for one another.

Through common study of the Bible we have gained a better understanding of God's word in the tradition of the great preachers and theologians of earlier centuries, and thus we have learned to read the Bible more faithfully in and with the Church. We can together learn to interpret the Scriptures in faithful attentiveness to the Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures, the same Spirit who Christ promised would lead the Church into all truth (John 16:3). In recent decades, this pneumatological and ecclesial way of reading the Scriptures is being widely recovered, thus protecting the sacred text from individualistic exegesis and those critical methodologies that are indifferent, or even hostile, to God's saving and sanctifying truth.

In communal worship, Evangelicals and other Protestants have helped Catholics to value more highly the effective proclamation of the word of God. At the same time, Evangelicals have learned from Catholics and Orthodox to appreciate more fully the importance of ordered liturgy, including a lectionary based on the seasons of the Christian year. Noteworthy also is the greater use of one another's legacy of hymnody. Patristic and medieval hymns are finding greater currency among some Evangelicals, while Catholics today praise God in the songs of Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, and others in the Evangelical tradition. In seminaries and programs of ministerial formation, leaders are increasingly being educated in both the unity and diversity of the one Christian movement in world history. Thus do we cultivate an understanding and experience of our belonging to a common Christian tradition. This is of growing importance in a century in which Christianity is sharply challenged by other world religions, most notably by Islam.

Always we are brought back to mission, and to explore how we might be more fully together in mission, for there is no doubt that Jesus speaks to all of us when he commands that we "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). As we are sent by the same Lord, as we go forth in the name of the same Lord, as we proclaim the same Lord, so we ought to evangelize with one another rather than against one another. In the words of the Evangelical leaders gathered at the Amsterdam 2000 conference on evangelization:

> Jesus prayed to the heavenly Father that his disciples would be one so that the world might believe. One of the great hindrances to evangelism worldwide is the lack of unity among Christ's people, a condition made worse when Christians compete and fight with one another rather than seeking together the mind of Christ. . . . In all ways that do not violate our consciences, we should pursue cooperation and partnerships with other believers in the task of evangelism, practicing the well-tested rule of Christian fellowship: "In necessary things unity, in nonessential things liberty, in all things charity." We pledge ourselves to pray and work for unity in truth among all true believers in Jesus and to cooperate as fully as possible in evangelism with other brothers and sisters in Christ so that the whole Church may take the whole gospel to the whole world.

We participants in Evangelicals and Catholics Together join in the pledge of Amsterdam 2000, agreeing also with the words of John Paul II in the 1990 encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (The Mission of the Redeemer):

> The relationship between activity aimed at Christian unity and missionary activity makes it necessary to consider two closely associated factors. . . . We must recognize that the division among Christians damages the holy work of preaching the gospel to every creature and is a barrier for many in their approach to the faith. The fact that the good news of reconciliation is preached by Christians who are divided among themselves weakens their witness. It is thus urgent to work for the unity of Christians, so that missionary activity can be more effective. At the same time, we must not forget that efforts toward unity are themselves a sign of the work of reconciliation which God is bringing about in our midst.

Faithful discipleship requires of us, Evangelicals and Catholics, that we "do good to all men, especially those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). We grow in the gift of, and vocation to, holiness as we give ourselves in service to the poor and needy. While individuals may disagree about what constitutes a just social

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order, we are united in our commitment to certain moral truths and their public recognition. Respecting the sanctity of human life at every stage of development and decline, securing the integrity of marriage and family life, protecting the disabled and vulnerable, caring for the marginalized and imprisoned—these are among the mandates that are bringing, and must increasingly bring, Evangelicals and Catholics together. Heartening also is our common witness and action in defense of religious freedom here and around the world, and an awakened sense of solidarity with persecuted Christians, joined with effective concern for non-Christians denied their rights of conscience. Moreover, Catholics and Evangelicals can assist one another in various circumstances by, for instance, defending one another from unfair public attacks, providing worship space and other facilities in times of need, and by taking up offerings for one another's charitable works. In all these and in many other ways we can both express and deepen our communion with one another that is God's present gift.

III

Communion among Christians includes the recognition of certain sacred rites, especially the sacraments or ordinances that come to us from Christ and the apostles. Although we have different understandings of how Christ orders his Church, we agree that communion has both visible and invisible dimensions. Catholics believe that the full and right ordering of the Church embraces seven sacraments, including the apostolic and sacramentally ordained ministry. Evangelicals, while differing both with Catholics and among themselves on the number and importance of sacraments, are agreed in respecting certain practices, such as Baptism, the Lord's Supper, marriage, and the reading of Scripture. Some of these sacred practices and institutions, though differently understood, are bonds between us that maintain and deepen our communion.

The Church itself can be understood as a sign and instrument of grace, instituted by the one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, and, through the gospel, mediating his grace to the world. While the ancient formula "Outside the Church no salvation" may lend itself to misunderstanding, we agree that there is no salvation apart from the Church, since to be related to Christ is necessarily to be related, in however full or tenuous a manner, to the Church which is his body. Although Catholics believe that the Church is visible in its universal dimension and not only in local congregations, we as Catholics and Evangelicals together affirm the statement of Amsterdam 2000:

> The Church is the people of God, the body and the bride of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The one, universal Church is a transnational, transcultural, transdenominational, and multi-ethnic family, the household of faith. In the widest sense, the Church includes all the redeemed of all the ages, being the one body of Christ extended throughout time as well as space. Here in the world, the Church becomes visible in all local congregations that meet to do together the things that according to the Scripture the Church does. Christ is the head of the Church. Everyone who is personally united to Christ by faith belongs to his body and by the Spirit is united with every other true believer in Jesus.

Similarly, we together affirm the statement of the Second Vatican Council:

> All are called to belong to the new People of God. Wherefore this People, while remaining one and unique, is to be spread throughout the whole world and must exist in all ages, so that the purpose of God's will may be fulfilled. . . . It follows that among all the nations of earth there is but one People of God, which takes its citizens from every race, making them citizens of a kingdom which is of a heavenly and not an earthly nature. For all the faithful scattered throughout the world are in communion with each other in the Holy Spirit. (*Lumen Gentium* II.13)

Because we do not have the same ecclesial structures and do not fully agree on the doctrinal heritage that we share, there are some things that we cannot in conscience do together. Our communion is most manifestly and painfully imperfect in our inability to be one at the table of the Lord in Holy Communion. Evangelicals differ among themselves as to how open or restrictive admission to the Lord's Supper should be. Catholics, for their part, cannot in conscience participate in an observance of the Lord's Supper absent communion with the apostolic ministry that they believe Christ wills for his Church. Evangelicals and Catholics together know that our Lord commanded us, "Do this." We know that he intended that we do this together. Our different discernments of what is entailed in doing this obediently prevent us from doing this together. This circumstance is an abiding and heartbreaking sadness.

We together pray that our imperfect communion will one day give way to full communion in eucharistic fellowship. At present, we cannot see beyond some disagreements that appear to be intractable. Our visibly fractured fellowship at the Lord's table can, at the same time, be a salutary reminder of how far we are from the goal of complete unity, and a spur to more urgent

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prayer and work that one day the prayer of Jesus in John 17 will be fully answered. That fulfillment is finally the work of the Holy Spirit, who moves in ways that we cannot always anticipate. In the meantime, however, we recognize that the right ordering of the Church and all the means of grace are precisely means. They serve the end of personal union with Christ, and that union is effected, by the grace of God, when believers avail themselves of the means of grace available to them. We Evangelicals and Catholics gratefully acknowledge our unity in being reconciled to God through Christ, and pray for the day when that unity can be expressed and strengthened by agreement on all the means of grace that Christ intends for his Church.

IV

The *communio sanctorum* embraces all Christians, including those whose lives are not notably marked by holiness. In the New Testament, the term "saints" generally refers to all who are baptized and confess Christ as Lord. The Christian tradition, following the New Testament, also lifts up some persons for special respect and veneration. The Letter to the Hebrews, for instance, proposes an honor roll of those in the history of salvation who are exemplars of heroic faith. The lives of such faithful men and women both point to and reflect the holiness of God in Christ.

> Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

As early as the second century, Christians gathered for worship at the tombs of the martyrs, celebrating the power of God's grace in the lives of these faithful men and women. They prayed to God for spiritual and temporal favors to be granted through the intercession of the martyrs. Indeed, in the early Church and through the patristic era, the phrase *communio sanctorum* had primary reference to this enduring bond between the faithful on earth and the faithful who had gone before, especially those whose witness was crowned with martyrdom. While all Christians are properly called saints, the word "saint" soon became a title of honor referring to exemplary lives among the faithful, and most notably the lives of martyrs. Our own time is rightly understood as a time of the martyrs, and it is a most encouraging development that Christians today increasingly recognize and revere those members of the several ecclesial communities who, in the century past and still now, offer the ultimate witness to the lordship of Christ.

As Christians, we are wayfarers who look forward to joining one day "the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven" (Hebrews 12:23). Scripture indicates that the martyrs beneath the heavenly altar still await their full vindication (Revelation 6:10). They are one with us, and we are one with them, in yearning for the completion of God's plan of salvation in the final establishment of the Kingdom of Christ who is "the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 22:13). In a world where many believe that this life is all there is, Christians are called to bear bold witness to the solidarity of the *communio sanctorum*, a solidarity secured by our communion with Jesus Christ—crucified, risen, and coming again—and with all, both the living and the dead, who are alive in Christ.

Catholics believe that there is a lively interaction, including an exchange of spiritual goods, between ourselves and those who have gone on to glory. This interaction is always in Christ and through Christ. Just as all Christians request the intercession of brothers and sisters on earth, so Catholics rely also on the intercession of the saints in heaven, of whom the Blessed Virgin Mary is foremost, and invoke their aid in prayers, recognizing that prayers to the saints are also prayers with the saints, directed to Christ and to the Father, and that all blessings are received from God. When the saints in heaven act, it is God who acts through them. This understanding is expressed in the Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*):

> It is supremely fitting that we love those friends and fellow heirs of Jesus Christ, who are also our brothers and extraordinary benefactors, that we render due thanks to God for them and "suppliantly invoke them and have recourse to their prayers, their power and help in obtaining benefits from God through His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who is our sole Redeemer and Savior." For by its very nature every genuine testimony of love which we show to those in heaven tends toward and terminates in Christ, who is the "crown of all saints." Through him it tends toward and terminates in God, who is wonderful in His saints and is magnified in them.

Evangelicals do not generally affirm the intercession of the saints in heaven, and do not ask for their intercession, since they do not find any explicit biblical warrant for such practice. They are sometimes puzzled, if not repelled, by the intense and various ways in which Catholics express communion with the saints. They caution, as do Catholics, against the dangers of

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abuse and superstition in connection with the cult of saints and of relics. Indeed, the formal Catholic procedures for beatifying and canonizing saints are intended, inter alia, to guard against superstition, miracle-mongering, and popular enthusiasms of a possibly heretical nature. While Evangelicals do not have such formal procedures, they have informal ways in which those who have lived exemplary lives of faith are recognized as deserving of particular honor. At the same time, however, some Evangelicals express concern that the Catholic doctrine of the "merits" of the saints implies that there is a basis of merit other than Christ the sole Redeemer, and are not convinced by Catholic assurances to the contrary. These are among the questions in need of further examination in our continuing conversation.

All Christians of all times have asked how God prepares believers for the beatific vision of the fullness of His glory. Holy Scripture does not present us with details about what happens to those who die in Christ—whether, as most Evangelicals believe, they enter immediately into the fullness of God's glory or, as Catholics believe, ordinarily undergo a period of further preparation. If sanctification is not complete here on earth, is it somehow completed between the time of death and the beatific vision? Catholics hold that one who dies in God's friendship while still suffering from certain sinful attachments and dispositions will be cleansed by "spiritual fire" in Purgatory. Evangelicals agree that our lives will be reviewed before the judgment seat of Christ, and all that is unworthy will be burned away. While Evangelicals find no biblical warrant for the doctrine of Purgatory, we together affirm with Paul, "If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Corinthians 3:14-15).

A detailed exploration of the doctrine of Purgatory and related questions is beyond the scope of this round of our conversation. Nor have we examined adequately suffrages for the dead, the question of indulgences, the role of Mary in Christian piety, or the sins of denominationalism against the communion that is God's present gift. Together, however, we do affirm that no true Christian, living or dead, can be outside the *communio sanctorum*, the fellowship of all who live in the crucified, risen, reigning, and returning Lord. Within the body of Christ, we know that we are to pray for one another and to offer up our sufferings for the sake of the Church (Colossians 1:24).

Living as we do in communion with those who have gone before us, we strive to realize in the pilgrim Church on earth a life together that more fully anticipates the communion of the Church in glory. It is our hope and prayer as Evangelicals and Catholics that by rightly using the means of grace afforded to us in the Church here on earth, we will be more fully conformed to Christ and thus be drawn into more perfect communion with one another and with the *communio sanctorum* triumphant, to the glory of the one and immortal God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. FT

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The Tribunal of Mercy

Daniel P. Moloney

It is surprising, given the events of the last year, to imagine that some members of the Roman Catholic clergy actively seek to be ordained a bishop, and even regard their path towards this office as an ecclesiastical "career." St. Augustine regarded his ordination as a grave danger to his salvation, because he knew he would have to answer to God for the souls of all those in his diocese. Pope Gregory the Great, worrying about the ease with which the sins of a bishop are magnified into scandal, argued that "no one does more harm to the Church than he who, having the title or rank of holiness, acts evilly." The widespread criticism of the bishops' handling of sexual abuse by Catholic priests ought to bring home to everyone the tremendous burden that comes with the office of bishop.

Let us examine the criticisms leveled against the bishops. Bishops are supposed to govern with mercy, as Christ did. So we shall (charitably) assume that, in giving former abusers chance after chance to clean up their lives and be faithful to their vocations, the bishops acted out of mercy—and not from negligence, or from indifference to the abuses and the abused, or from fear of public scandal. If we make this assumption, we can still say that they seem to have acted with a naiveté that is scandalous in people with such broad responsibilities, because in their mercy they took too few precautions that the abusers would not strike again with other victims.

After the story broke and public opinion wondered why these criminals were treated so leniently, the bishops then made the equal and opposite mistake: having been burned by being too merciful, they turned around and zealously applied the strictest justice, in the form of "zero tolerance" policies. But, as Richard John Neuhaus has argued at length, that response seems neither Christian nor, in many cases, just. Yet, if the bishops turn around again and behave mercifully toward their priests, it isn't clear how this will help the situation that brought on all the criticism in the first place.

Part of the difficulty here comes from a conceptual confusion, the common view that justice and mercy are opposed to each other. This view assumes that mercy is the Christian virtue, justice the secular one; mercy the virtue that tailors policies to the individual, justice the impersonal universal law; mercy is leniency, justice strictness. This view is frequently found among some of the greatest religious minds. Reinhold Niebuhr, who held this view, found it in Karl Barth, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and, before that, Augustine's *City of God*. Luther's distinction between law and gospel seems to express this view, as does the vision of the twentieth-century Polish mystic St. Faustina Kowalska, which portrays a wrathful God the Father holding back from the application of terrible justice only because He sees man through the wounds of His Son. Even Richard Rorty, who is not a great religious mind, thinks that the success of liberal democracies lies in the creative tensions between "the agents of love" and "the agents of justice," explained more or less in this way.

Yet this sharp opposition deserves to be called into question. Any mother knows that treating all her children alike is unjust—the twelve-year-old girl needs to be treated one way, the three-year-old boy another, and the seventeen-year-old young man in yet another way. The twelve-year-old who earns perfect grades in school might be rewarded by staying up late to watch Olympic gymnastics, while the seventeen-year-old might regard watching gymnastics as more like torture. It is ridiculous to expect the three-year-old to be as responsible as his teenage older brother, for example; if both

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punch their best friends, the one should be sent to the corner while the other might be grounded for an extended period. It would be silly to argue that since both have committed the same act, they should be punished similarly, that to punish the toddler lightly is somehow to frustrate justice. We don't expect children to control their anger as well as adults, and so it would be monstrous to hold the toddler to the moral standard of an adult, by bringing him up on charges of battery, say. In this case, to reward and punish each child individually, the hallmark of mercy in the view I'm criticizing, is clearly to act with justice as well.

To treat people as other than they are is inherently unjust. Since people are persons, it follows that to treat them impersonally is likewise unjust. Yet human laws are applied without regard to the personal history of each person subject to them. So it would seem that every human law is unjust.

This conclusion obviously requires qualification, since baldly stated it seems crazy—the very word "just" is derived from a Latin word for law, after all. But the idea that every human law is imperfect, and therefore unjust to some extent, does indeed make sense, because we can imagine a perfectly just judge who administers perfect justice—who assesses a person's talents, motives, opportunities, weaknesses, ideals, history, and everything else about him, and then judges all his actions against the standard of what he is able to do. The perfect judge would have to apply an infinitely complex law, so that each person under the law would be held to a standard that is individually tailored to his situation: "Anyone who was born on May 23 at 2:53 p.m. at 1128 Main St. and whose first sight was of a quite pretty nurse named Amy whose hands were slightly cold . . . " and so on, telling the exact story of your life in literally every detail, " . . . any such person ought to have been able to control his temper upon discovering that the morning newspaper was wet from the rain, but could not be expected to remember to buy a card for his sister's sixteenth birthday."

Such a perfect judge would also have to be omniscient, for he would have to know an infinitely complex law and know the infinitely many ways people can fall short of that law. He would have to know men's hearts, evaluating them in the mysterious intimacy of their free choices, and he could not be repulsed by what he found there. And finally, he would have to care enough about the law and the people to administer such a law perfectly.

But such an omniscient and conscientious judge would still not administer perfect justice unless the laws he administered were also perfectly just. So the perfect judge would have to be the perfect lawgiver, whose laws are not only infinitely complex but also ordered toward a perfectly just society. And he would have to be the perfect executive, since his laws would have to be effective in bringing about this just society.

If the goal of this judge, lawgiver, and king were to have a perfectly ordered society, then he could not be satisfied with perfect laws that nobody actually follows, or that people once were able to follow but are now observed more in the breach. His laws would have to be dynamic, so that they constantly adjust to reflect what a person could be expected to achieve at this moment, and his sentences would have to be therapeutic, so that when a person fails to uphold his personal law he is rehabilitated and even strengthened because of his punishment. If the laws were dynamic but the punishments not therapeutic, if every time someone broke the law it was adjusted downward to accommodate the downward pull of vice, it would clearly result in general disorder and not a just society. Alternatively, if the sentences were therapeutic but the laws not dynamic, if every punishment improved a person but the laws never reflected this, then the law would cease to be related to the person, and would again become unjust. Either the laws would be too strict—for instance, putting the three-year-old in jail for striking a playmate—or inadequate to restore order—telling the teenager who beat up a classmate to sit in the corner for twenty minutes.

It should be obvious that only God could create and administer this perfect justice. It might be the "God of the philosophers" rather than "the God of revelation," since we've only spoken in general terms about divine attributes, as philosophers do. In any case, the point stands that if such a perfectly just God exists, then all human laws are imperfectly just, which is to say that they are all unjust, to a greater or lesser degree.

It should also be clear that this perfect justice is no different than mercy. Each law is tailored to the individual person, so that what he is expected to do is always within his reach. If he meets one set of expectations he is presented with new demands, so that he travels up an inclined plane until he is at all times living up to his full potential. If he fails to meet one set of expectations, he is given another chance to conform to a new set, and to continue, step by step, to become all that he can be. There is no distinction here between strictness and leniency, the impersonal and the personal. God's justice is completely personal, and therefore is neither strict nor lenient.

In the apostolic exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, Pope John Paul II reflects on the nature of the sacrament of Penance:

> According to the most ancient traditional idea, the Sacrament is a kind of judicial action; but this takes place before a tribunal of mercy rather than of strict and rigorous justice,

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> which is comparable to human tribunals only by analogy. . . .
>
> But as it reflects on the function of this Sacrament, the Church's consciousness discerns in it, over and above the character of judgment in the sense just mentioned, a healing of a medicinal character. And this is linked to the fact that the gospel frequently presents Christ as healer, while his redemptive work is often called, from Christian antiquity, *medicine salutes*. "I wish to heal, not accuse," Saint Augustine said, referring to the exercise of the pastoral activity regarding Penance, and it is thanks to the medicine of Confession that the experience of sin does not degenerate into despair. . . . Whether as a tribunal of mercy or a place of spiritual healing, under both aspects the Sacrament requires a knowledge of the sinner's heart, in order to be able to judge and absolve, to cure and heal.

The image of the tribunal, not of justice but of mercy, where the penitent appears before Christ who is both judge and healer, captures something of the peculiar nature of divine justice. Pleading guilty before the tribunal of mercy is a prerequisite to forgiveness, just as telling the doctor what ails us is necessary before he can administer the appropriate cure.

Perfect justice, then, is identical with mercy. They both can be explained in terms of helping each person be all that God intended him to be. Human law is by its very nature unjust, impersonal, and inappropriately strict. This difference between divine and human justice makes necessary the secrecy of the confessional—what the penitent confesses is for God's tribunal of mercy alone, not for men. The impersonal tribunals of the civil court system will not be so merciful because they are not as just. The eyes of the media are more merciless still, lacking even the court's rudimentary safeguards on vindictive emotion, while the fury of rumor, *Fama malus*, is epic. Nowhere is man's justice proportionate to God's; nowhere are his tribunals as fair, nor anywhere his sentences as wise.

In his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, on the mercy of God the Father, the Pope argues that the aspirations of human justice must always be related to the perfect justice and mercy of God. Christians cannot be satisfied with the cruelties of human justice, despite the temptation to do so:

> Christ, in revealing the love-mercy of God, at the same time demanded from people that they also should be guided in their lives by love and mercy. This requirement forms part of the very essence of the messianic message, and constitutes the heart of the gospel ethos. The Teacher expresses this both through the medium of the commandment which he describes as "the greatest" (Matthew 22:38), and also in the form of a blessing, when in the Sermon on the Mount he proclaims: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7)

The heart of the gospel ethos is to treat others with the love and mercy characteristic of God. The Pope's prophetic, even otherworldly positions on ecumenism, capital punishment, third-world debt relief, and a host of other issues of contemporary politics seem to be grounded in this insistence that our notions of justice be derived from the perfect justice and mercy of God.

Yet against this background it is important to note that in his message for the 2002 World Day of Peace the Pope declares, "There exists . . . a right to defend oneself against terrorism." Somehow, divine mercy—the "very essence of the messianic message"—is compatible with a far-flung military action in the name of justice. Pacifism is not the necessary consequence of the imitation of God's mercy.

There are two typical sorts of reaction to this. The first, characteristic of Reinhold Niebuhr and other "Christian realists," is to worry that this attempt at uniting justice and mercy will either water down the Christian ideal of pure love, which leads necessarily to pacifism even in the face of attack, or that it will persuade politicians to be irresponsibly merciful and trusting towards those nations and powers that threaten it. The unfortunate lot of the responsible Christian politician in this life is to act in the world of power politics with all its messiness and moral impurity, while looking to the morally pure life of the Christian pacifist for a reminder of how man should treat—and, God willing, in the life to come will treat—his fellow man. In a famous exchange with H. Richard Niebuhr in the pages of the *Christian Century*, Reinhold Niebuhr wrote,

> I realize quite well that my brother's position [nonviolent pacifism, roughly] both in its ethical perfectionism and in its apocalyptic note is closer to the gospel than mine. I am forced to admit that I am unable to construct an adequate social ethic out of a pure love ethic. I cannot abandon the pure love ideal because anything which falls short of it is less than the ideal. But I cannot use it fully if I want to assume a responsible attitude towards the problems of society. Religious perfectionism drives either to asceticism or apocalypticism. In the one case the problems of society are given up entirely; in the other individual perfection is regarded as the force which will release the redemptive powers

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> of God for society. I think the second alternative is better than the first, and that both elements must be retained for any adequate social ethic, lest it become lost in the relativities of expediency. But as long as the world of man remains a place where nature and God, the real and the ideal, meet, human progress will depend upon the judicious use of the forces of nature in the service of the ideal.

This view is striking in its willingness to compromise the putative demands of God in response to the demands of the sinful world. The Christian realist regards the pursuit of sanctity as the calling of a few individuals, and incompatible with the demands of pursuing justice in a sinful world. So the view I am forwarding—that every Christian is called to act with mercy—appears to the Christian realist to be utopian and even irresponsible.

The other reaction, which is characteristic of Stanley Hauerwas, John Howard Yoder, Michael Baxter, and a host of Christian pacifists, is to point out the incoherence or even hypocrisy of holding on the one hand that we should be merciful and forgiving towards all men everywhere, and on the other that the U.S. is justified in its war on terrorism. They would reject this view of God's action, and argue that to follow Jesus is to embrace the cross, to abandon oneself wholly to God's providence even if it leads to our deaths, rather than succumb to the worldly ways of violence and power politics. Hauerwas in his Gifford Lectures quotes a typical passage from Yoder:

> Christ is *agape*; self-giving, nonresistant love. At the cross this nonresistance, including the refusal to use political means of self-defense, found its ultimate revelation in the uncomplaining and forgiving death of the innocent at the hands of the guilty. This death reveals how God deals with evil; here is the only valid starting point for Christian pacifism or nonresistance. The cross is the extreme demonstration that *agape* seeks neither effectiveness nor justice, and is willing to suffer any loss or seeming defeat for the sake of obedience.

This view insists against the realists that the gospel makes real political demands, that Christians must engage in politics, but not violent politics or politics that enters into negotiations with the world. The "politics of Jesus," to use Yoder's phrase, demands that through the collective witness of the Church Christians bring the gospel to the attention of the world with a compelling and revolutionary challenge to the powers of the age, as Jesus did by rejecting temporal power and accepting death on the cross. To accept even the right of self-defense, as the Pope does, is to accept the all-too-human logic of worldly power structures and to ignore the decisive victory of the Lamb. It is to lack faith in God's liberating power, and perhaps even to affirm a practical atheism.

The view of justice and mercy I sketched above, which takes seriously the nature and demands of perfect justice and divine mercy, incorporates some truths from both these positions. Like the pacifists, it holds that the political sphere is under the jurisdiction of the gospel message, that all men are called to imitate the mercy and love of God, and to strive to be perfect as He is perfect. Like the realists, it holds that being responsible for people other than oneself does create a different set of moral demands that it would be wrong to ignore. Let us explore how divine mercy can embrace these traditionally opposite views.

It is, to say the least, difficult to understand how it is possible to be loving and merciful to people one is trying to kill. Nevertheless, this must be a possibility if the demands of universal love and the right of self-defense from terrorism are compatible. To think about this problem, let's try a thought experiment.

Your brother has been having some psychological problems that have caused him to leave his job for a time. You invite him to live with you for as long as it takes to work through these problems. Your whole family makes the effort to shower him with affection, yet his psychological problems worsen and you talk to your spouse about institutionalizing him. Unbeknownst to you, he overhears this conversation.

One day as the rest of the family is heading to church, he comes out of the house with a knife and attacks your fourth-grade daughter, slashing her arm with the first swipe of the blade. As your brother yells at you and your daughter bleeds, you realize that he has overheard your conversation about the mental institution and does not want to go. You try to placate him, but he attacks again and narrowly misses your youngest son. You know his situation exactly, your heart goes out to him, you want to help him rather than harm him, but you have to protect your family. So you take the gun you keep in the glove compartment of your car and shoot your brother, at first just to get him to stop—shooting at the sky and then shooting him in the leg—but when that proves ineffective, you shoot to kill. Needless to say, you mourn for your brother's life, and you teach your children to do the same.

It is fair to say that in such a tragic situation, it is possible to love your enemy even as you kill him. Your brother can be an enemy and still be your brother, whom you love despite all his faults, and for whom you would do almost anything. If you didn't have to protect

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your family, you might not have had to shoot him, for you would have had more flexibility and been able to take greater personal risks. But in that situation, being responsible for the lives of all the members of your family, you lacked such flexibility. You no longer were able to be patient and forgiving. Perhaps if you were stronger and could handle yourself in a knife fight, you might have had the training and the ability to protect your family without harming your brother, but you didn't. So you killed your brother, even as you forgave him and asked God to forgive him for what he unknowingly did.

This example reveals how one can love an enemy without ignoring that he is an enemy, how the demands of responsibility can put a limit on how merciful an action can be without limiting the mercy in one's heart. In this case, where killing is the action that accords with justice, mercy does not stay the hand, but it does soften the heart. The action appears harsh, but the intention mitigates the harshness of the act. Which is not to say that good intentions make any action just; but in this case, where the just action is to take another's life, it would be wrong not to kill, just as it would be wrong not to love and forgive while killing. As the Pope says in his message for the World Day of Peace, "Forgiveness is the opposite of resentment and revenge, not of justice."

> Forgiveness is in no way opposed to justice, as if to forgive meant to overlook the need to right the wrong done. It is rather the fullness of justice, leading to that tranquility of order which is much more than a fragile and temporary cessation of hostilities, involving as it does the deepest healing of the wounds which fester in human hearts. Justice and forgiveness are both essential to such healing.

To be responsible stewards of God's creation, we have to work to put this lasting order, what Augustine called the *tranquillitas ordinis*, into effect. Providence allots each person's responsibilities differently—some are responsible for the fate of nations, others only for the upbringing of their children—but each person is responsible for the lives and fortunes of those who happen across his path. As we have seen, the scope and sphere of this responsibility might put a person in a situation where the love he ought to have for all men, even his enemies, runs up against the responsibility he has to defend those he has been given to protect. In that situation, a person may be forced by the demands of justice to use violence. He should seek to avoid such situations, and where possible to act meekly towards all men, hoping to sacrifice honor and pride in the near term to win over his enemy to a long-term friendship. Indeed, every person who wants to follow God's example must make whatever excuses he can for great sinners such as bin Laden, Hussein, and (albeit in a different way) Father Shanley, to forgive them, and to hope that they grow in love for God and neighbor. The limits that the execution of one's responsibilities in justice might place on the scope of one's merciful action do not grant anyone an excuse for vengeance or hatred. But this does not mean that we are required, or even permitted, to forgo the necessary defense of those for whom we find ourselves responsible when they are attacked.

In the thought experiment above, if I have the ability to save my family and disarm my brother, then I have the obligation to do so. If I don't have the ability, I am not obligated to do so. If the U.S. Army is so powerful that it can distinguish between combatants and noncombatants without putting its soldiers at unnecessary risk, then it has an obligation to do so; if this cannot be done without risking many lives, then we will sadly have to expect civilian casualties (though the army still must not target civilians as a terror tactic).

In any case, if we follow the logic of divine mercy to its conclusion, we can see that while this or that person might be called to an avoidable martyrdom out of eschatological witness, it would be wrong for the President of the United States, who is entrusted with the protection of millions of people, to allow his country to be attacked. He must do what he can to protect his people, acting not out of vengeance, but out of a realistic assessment of the needs of self-defense. If an attack is not likely to be dangerous, he should practice patience and forbearance with the country's enemies. But if there is a clear and present danger, he has a responsibility to act, perhaps with much bloodshed, all the while following Lincoln's dictum, "with malice toward none, with charity toward all."

So a war defending those for whom one is responsible can be a just war. On the other hand, the reverse is also true: killing that is not defensive in nature violates the demand of mercy that we should be forbearing and patient with a person unless he is dangerous to us. Hence the logic of divine mercy leads us to reconsider another issue of life and death: capital punishment. And here we find that putting mercy at the forefront of our moral analysis removes the major premise of the traditional moral argument for capital punishment, namely, that the death penalty is just retribution for the murderer's extreme violation of the social order. In the mercy of God, there is no retributive justice, no eye for an eye, no settling of scores. This follows from God's transcendence, since no act of a mere human being can restore to God what was taken from Him by the murderer's sin. And it follows from the finality of death, because the death of the murderer cannot bring the victim back to life. When someone has committed murder, the best that can happen is that future murders are

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deterred, and that the murderer decides to change for the better. The policy in accord with perfect justice tries to bring about this best outcome. Certain sorts of punishment make the prisoner learn a lesson and grow as a person—they are therapeutic, as we mentioned earlier—and so make sense in the context of God's justice and mercy. Capital punishment, though, is not so compatible, except where the death of the criminal is necessary to prevent further harm to others. Where a criminal can be held in prison so that he is not likely to be a danger to the rest of society, including the other prisoners, then considerations of perfect justice suggest that he should not be killed.

This is, famously, the position advocated by John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae*, and adopted in the most recent edition of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Part of what the above reflections have shown is that the considerations of the mercy of God in *Dives in Misericordia* lead to the comments about the morality of capital punishment in *Evangelium Vitae* and the justification of the war on terrorism in the message for the World Day of Peace. Which is to say that from that early encyclical's disciplined reflection on the parable of the prodigal son, on the atonement of Christ, and on the covenant of God with Israel, one can develop a general Christian moral framework for thinking about practical questions such as capital punishment and how to deal with threats by terrorists.

This possibility would have been surprising to Reinhold Niebuhr, and as the earlier quote from Niebuhr suggests, he would find the result reassuring. On the other hand, Christian pacifists influenced by Hauerwas and Yoder should find this framework unsettling in the way it links Christian love and mercy to the responsible use of coercion. If the argument above withstands scrutiny, then we can plausibly call this framework "the politics of God the Father," echoing the title of Yoder's book *The Politics of Jesus*. Yoder's book was a response to those, such as Niebuhr, who think that the Gospels are irrelevant to the large social questions of war and politics, and therefore that Christians ought to think about these questions solely using secular categories of power relations. Yoder's claim is that the gospel message will always have political consequences, which Christians ought to spread throughout society.

The politics of God the Father shares this claim. It does not agree with Yoder's further argument that the life of Jesus must be read with a political eye, or that in such a reading the unambiguous message is that everyone should renounce all forms of coercion, even economic coercion, and rebuild all social structures from the ground up. Yoder's reading relies on a tendentious application of a narrow strain of "social" or "political" biblical criticism that was in the avant-garde in the late 1960s. Those who want to follow Yoder by applying to politics the gospel injunctions to love and mercy, and yet who are not persuaded by the same biblical criticism or by his politicized reading of the New Testament, might look more closely at the politics of God the Father developed by John Paul II.

Which brings us again to the bishops, who more than anyone should try to govern in accord with divine justice and mercy. We now have the conceptual tools and theological vocabulary to analyze their problem appropriately. Let us again assume out of charity that the bishops tried to act responsibly, and were neither negligent, nor indifferent to the abuses and the abused, nor afraid of public scandal. If a responsible bishop nonetheless allowed an abusive priest to continue in office when he shouldn't have, we can see that he made a mistake about his latitude for mercy given his sphere of responsibility. If the bishop were responsible only for the abusive priest, then mercy would demand that he be patient with him as with any sinner, granting forgiveness and helping him to begin his life again. This is indeed the duty of the priest's confessor or spiritual director, the representative of the tribunal of mercy. The bishop is also responsible for the reputation of the clergy and the finances of the diocese, and concern for these might lead him to seek quiet ways of handling potential lawsuits, while still helping the troubled priest begin his life anew, perhaps in a different locale. If the bishop's sphere of responsibility went this far and no further, then he would be right to do as many of the bishops seem to have done—namely, to have covered up the abuses of certain priests while at the same time helping them with counseling, moving them from place to place, and looking for ways to give them another chance to serve God. Such is the behavior of a benevolent CEO towards a talented employee going through personal difficulties, and given that sphere of responsibility, such actions fulfill the demands of mercy and justice.

But the bishop has a larger sphere of responsibility than the benevolent CEO. He has direct responsibility for his entire diocese, especially the laity, and he has an indirect responsibility before God even for the non-Catholics in the boundaries of his diocese, and in a wider sense he has the responsibility of reconciling all creation to its creator. These responsibilities are not on the same level—he has to answer more directly for the souls of the Catholics in his diocese than for the souls of others—but they are quite real. And because they are real, and extensive, they put limits on how lenient and patient he can be with abusive clergy. As with the analogous cases of just war and capital punishment, the bishop must do all that he can to forgive and rehabilitate an abusive priest, so long as the priest is not likely to be dangerous to other people. But where the freedom and good reputation of the priest allow him to be dangerous

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to others, then the bishop must act: taking away the priest's freedom either by putting him in a monastery or turning him over to the police, depending on the sort of danger he presents; and, if his unrepentant behavior threatens the reputation of other priests for whom the bishop is also responsible, even going so far as to remove him from the priesthood.

A bishop can sin if he restricts his sphere of responsibility to the clergy and the possessions of the diocese, forgetting the rest of his flock. He can also sin in another way, if he pays so much attention to the multitudes for whom he is responsible that he neglects his responsibility for the souls of the troubled priests. For the demands of mercy require that the bishop act not just for his flock as a whole, but that he show solidarity for and be concerned with each *individual* person in the full mystery of his or her personhood. And so he cannot hide behind universal, impersonal laws such as the crude, one-punishment-fits-all-souls policy of "zero tolerance" proposed last summer. We might better call this a "zero-mercy" policy, because it leaves behind the divine embrace of the tribunal of mercy for the cold winds of very human justice, complete with paparazzi, TV and radio talk shows, and angry mobs of protesters. Imagine the parable of the prodigal son rewritten by the *National Enquirer*, and one has some sense of just how inappropriate it is for a bishop to allow any member of his flock to have his dignity violated in this way. Fortunately, the Holy See has rejected this policy.

Augustine was right to think that becoming a bishop puts one's soul in grave danger. When the Church calls someone to become a bishop, she entrusts him with countless souls for which he will have to give an account at his Judgment. This is the most theologically compelling reason why a careerist mentality corrupts the episcopacy. There are no easy ways for the bishops to respond to grave sins in a person's past. A bishop sins if he deals with abusive priests the way a benevolent CEO deals with a troubled employee; he sins also if he acts like a strong CEO who distances the company from a disgraced employee. This means that a bishop cannot see himself as a CEO. He is a shepherd, a physician, a teacher, and most of all a father who has to educate, discipline, and form all his sons and daughters, while making it clear that they are always his children, and that while they might need to be punished, they will not be disowned, no matter what they do. This is "the heart of the gospel message," according to the Pope, which the bishops are called to make present in the world.

Saints Augustine and Gregory might add: Or else. FT

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Tradition, History, and Sequoias

Wilfred M. McClay

It is my impression that many of the finest and most stimulating historians of the present generation are historians of religion, and of Christianity in particular—and, furthermore, that they are men and women who are themselves more often than not serious and engaged Christians. The assertion of the particularly high quality of students of Christianity who practice what they write about is a debatable one, but even if it is only partially true, it constitutes a phenomenon well worth reflecting upon.

There are of course many possible reasons for this state of affairs. It may, for example, have something to do with the defensive and self-critical posture Christians are forced to assume in the academy. This is not always a pleasant experience, to put it mildly. But it may, like other forms of unwanted discipline, have had certain beneficial effects. Being salt always entails being in a minority; and being in a minority means that the benevolence and fairmindedness of the mainstream can never be presumed. Hence, one must stay on one's toes, and strive to be, academically speaking, a Hebrew of Hebrews. I doubt very much that the fate that has befallen Michael Bellesiles of Emory University—a case that, among other things, represents a massive and sustained failure of the historical profession's peer-review processes—could have befallen an openly Christian scholar. Not because the latter scholars are better, but because their work is likely to have received more intense and scrupulous vetting, particularly when that work is controversial.

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Christian scholars also have the advantage of approaching their work with a built-in resistance to corrosive doctrines of nihilism and relativism, which are ultimately destructive of the whole historical enterprise. Yet at the same time, paradoxically, they have an informed sense of the limits to positivism, materialism, rationalism, and other forms of reductionism. In other words, the Christian faith equips one to appreciate both the value of conventional standards of evidence-gathering and proof, and their inherent limitations—and to hold these complementary but conflicting insights in balance. Such balance is otherwise hard to find in an intellectual world where one's choices often seem limited to either sterile modernism or wild postmodernism.

But there is an additional way that the Christian faith may strengthen the enterprise of historical scholarship. Christian faith requires one to take account of the past as something real, as something in which one is unavoidably embedded, and to which one is profoundly connected—indeed, as something that has a certain measure of authority over the present and future. The extent to which it does so varies, depending on one's theological or confessional position. And there are important countervailing forces, both in the Christian faith itself and in contemporary culture more generally, that work against such accounting. But the fact remains that a religion that asks its adherents to walk by faith and not sight, and to order their lives around revelations and events that occurred at least two millennia ago, is a religion that places an enormous value upon the authority of the past. We do not turn to the past only out of curiosity, or out of a desire to recast it in a mold more to our liking, or to make of it a suitable background for whatever we propose to do next. For Christians, the past really has something to teach. As it happens, this is a disposition that, if followed, can make for superior historical insight.

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Looking for wisdom in the past is a very complicated matter. Consider the very word "tradition." The term is an enormously rich and complex one. It contains worlds within itself, and manages to retain a profound ambivalence toward the very thing it signifies. That ambivalence is evident early in the word's history. The word "tradition" comes from the Latin *traditio*, and before that from the past participle of the verb *tradere*, which means "to deliver," in the sense of carrying something across, from one place to another. But it also means, and this seems to be the more primary meaning, "to surrender" or "to betray." In other words, although the word seems consistently to refer to the act of "carrying across," it can convey more than one sense of the concept. It not only means "to hand down," but also "to hand over."

Indeed, the more negative meaning of "tradition" as a "surrender" or "betrayal" seems to have come earliest in the word's history, and the more benign meaning of "handing down" customs, stories, and beliefs—the meaning that now seems our chief association with the word—seems to have been a later modification. There are other words deriving from the same root that are still in circulation, and have retained elements of the more negative meaning. For example, we still may use the verb "to traduce" to complain of an act of verbal defamation, or to call someone a "traitor." This amazingly versatile common root is what made possible the famous Italian pun, *Traduttore, traditore!*—literally, "Translator, Betrayer!"—the translator, meaning one who takes it as his or her task to "carry across" the linguistic lines, is a traitor to, or betrayer of, the thing he translates.

So, although there is a certain comfortable feeling that attaches to the word "tradition," the word contains many countercurrents. The sense of tradition as a betrayal of human potential is especially strong in modern American culture. Think, for example, of the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who began his *Nature* with the following cry:

> The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should we not have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs?. . . The sun shines today also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship.

When Emerson later divided our intellectual history between "the party of memory" and "the party of hope," there was little doubt which was to be preferred.

Or if Emerson is too highbrow for you, then consider the words of the great anti-historical philosopher of history, Henry Ford. I have to admit that I've always rather liked his description of history as "one damned thing after another," which perhaps has unrealized potential for Christian historians. And even though he didn't mean it in a Calvinistic way, it shows a certain flair for anti-metanarrative. But his cruder, and better-known, words are probably closer to expressing the strain of anti-traditionalism in the American outlook: "History is more or less bunk. It's tradition. We don't want tradition. We want to live in the present, and the only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history we make today."

Or consider the tensions in the hit musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. Tevye the milkman, a lovably ineffectual spokesman for the authority of Jewish "Tradition," has been portrayed by actors speaking not only English, French, Russian, and German, but Japanese, Turkish, and Chinese. Apparently, you don't even have to be Judeo-Christian to love the story, for its appeal seems to be frankly archetypal rather than historical. At its core, it is a parable of modernization, of the breakdown of shtetl life and the emigration to America, the land of the future.

While the life of the shtetl is lovingly portrayed, with its wonderfully colorful array of human types, on the crucial issue separating the traditional order from the modern one—the issue of arranged marriages, and more generally, the importance of romantic love and mutual consent in marriage—it leaves us in no doubt that the old order did not stand a chance. When Tevye rejects his daughter who dares to elope with a non-Jew, and treats her as if she were dead, we see him as monstrously inhuman. Such rigidity seems almost of a piece with the brutal Czarist pogroms that finally drive these Russian Jews to seek freedom and peace in America. The oft-repeated refrain of the song "Tradition!" with which the musical so brightly begins has become subdued and plaintive, almost a dirge, by the end.

Ambivalence about tradition is also a prominent feature of the Christian faith. The gospel is about new birth, about the making of a new man in the crucible of conversion—about the washing away of sin, the canceling of debt, the negating of the weight of the past, the annulling of the condemning power of the Law in favor of the redeeming and renewing power of the Spirit. This suspicion of the hidebound and traditional seems to be especially strong in certain strains of Protestantism, where it is sometimes informed by an explicit or implicit anti-Catholic polemic, which distrusts the institutional Church's tendency to be shaped by the historical accruals of the past, and which often looks back to the simplicity of the apostolic church as a model for renewal. The old rugged cross is not venera-

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ble because it is old—that is, because of a traditional or historical meaning—but because the truth it embodies is imperishable. There is nothing, in the extreme version of this view, that the Church can "carry over" from one generation to the next. There are no grandchildren in the Kingdom of Heaven, since the fundamental insight of the gospel must be freshly reappropriated by each of us individually—person by person, and generation by generation.

Yet the antitraditional radicalism of Christianity is not exclusive to Protestants. It is intrinsic to the Christian faith. One of the chief elements of Jesus' radicalism is his constant criticism of the religious establishment of his day, not only for its pride and impiety, and its self-serving disregard for the plain meaning of Scripture, but for its exaggerated reverence for its own traditions. Again and again he defied social convention, often by showing concern for the very people who were normally despised or marginalized by respectable society. He spoke to women in public. He showed special solicitude for children, a countercultural gesture in a Roman-dominated world that calmly accepted such horrors as infanticide and the deliberate abandonment of unwanted children. He associated with prostitutes and lepers, and even allowed them to touch him. He demonstrated repeatedly his disdain for particular human customs, and he did so because he wanted to expose those who mistook the authority of tradition for the authority of the word and will of God. "Why," asked the Pharisees and teachers of the Law, "do your disciples break the tradition of the elders?" Jesus fires back with a question of his own: "Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?" (Matthew 15:2) No matter how venerable, the traditions had no authority of their own, unless they were clearly in line with the more primary authority of God's word.

So antitraditionalism is strong in American culture, strong in the Christian faith—and it's also strong in the historical profession. True, there is a weak sense of the word "tradition" that is common in scholarly discourse. There are many shelves worth of books with the word in their title. But in that setting the word usually plays the same vague role that the word "community" is so often called upon to play in our speech. These are what might be called "nominal nouns," which exist as hooks on which modifiers can be conveniently hung to give the appearance of solidity to the things they are describing. So, just as we have "the world community," the "international community," the "intelligence community," the "scholarly community," and even "the drug-abuse community"—communities, in short, that are not communities—so we have books with titles such as *The Anarchist Tradition in American Poetry*—traditions that are not traditions. This weaker use of the term "tradition" is not terribly significant; it's a way for a scholar or publisher to impart a sense of coherence to what otherwise might look like a grab bag of disparate materials.

But as for "tradition" in its stronger sense, the authoritative sense given it by Tevye and others, we historians are taught to distrust it profoundly, and treat it as guilty unless proven innocent. The invocation of "tradition" is routinely regarded as an act of rank mystification, and the likely stalking-horse for some present-minded political purpose, some lurking act of domination or exploitation. For a long time now, historians have treated the work of Eric Hobsbawm and his anthology *The Invention of Tradition* as something approaching Holy Writ, and the mention of it is guaranteed to certify oneself as a deep thinker, a critical mind, a properly educated person who is not rube enough to be taken in by nationalist sentimentalities and packaged nostalgia. The underlying spirit of modern historical scholarship places a high premium on debunking, and the assault on tradition is an inevitable concomitant of that spirit.

Then there is the fact of our living in a technologically, socially, and economically dynamic society, where the rhythm of constant change, institutionalized in what we interestingly call "the fashion industry," is often our only constant. It is the inevitable tendency of consumer capitalism, with its relentless drive toward fluidity and mutability, to encourage the constant erasure of memory to make room for new desires, new markets, new purchases. The result is that memory itself, always a mutable thing, is lost or debased in the process. Tradition not only cramps the human spirit, it can be bad for the economy.

So the suspicion of tradition is, as it were, overdetermined in American life, both in terms of the general culture and in so many of the particulars of that culture, some of which—but not all of which—are admirable. I'm reminded, in an ironic way, of the famous words at the end of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, in which the title character's hunger for possibility, symbolized by the green light at the end of Daisy's pier, is shown to be futile: "So we beat on," Fitzgerald intoned, "boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." Beautiful words. Yet we would seem to have the *opposite* problem, especially as historians. No matter how hard we try to make sustaining contact with the past, we are ceaselessly borne back into the present. Our culture, our faith, our professional training—all seem to conspire in keeping the past at arm's length.

But Fitzgerald had it right, perhaps without entirely realizing it. For Gatsby's desire was not really for the future. It was a yearning for the recovery of the past. He longed for a restoration and fulfillment of his romance with Daisy, the goal to which he had dedicated his whole life, and his entire personal makeover. It was an unworthy goal, pursued by unworthy means, and

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that's a big part of what the book is about. But my point, and perhaps some part of Fitzgerald's too, is that the human longing for sustaining contact with the past is not something that can be willed away.

For Christians, all the modern world's accumulated suspicion of tradition and memory has to yield and bow its knee before Jesus' singular command: *Do this in remembrance of me.* This is the only regular ritual act that Jesus instituted, and it is fundamental, irreducible, inescapable, central. His body given, his blood shed, his suffering, his death, his resurrection, the prospect of his return—all of these things, and more, are to be *remembered.* Our denominational and confessional traditions differ in the respective emphases given to each of these. But they are united in contending that the remembrance of Christ is to be kept fresh and vital, to be placed before our eyes regularly, day after day, week after week, generation after generation. This is a principal aim of Christian worship, to make Christ's death present for us—to make it, in the best sense of that much-abused word, *contemporary*, meaning that it is made fully manifest to us in our time. This is the profoundest imaginable application of tradition.

When we speak of "the faith once *delivered* to the saints"—that "delivery" is precisely *traditional*, in that word's elemental senses. When we speak of "remembering" Jesus' death, we speak of something we did not experience firsthand, but something that we came to "know," at least at first, through *traditional* means. Evangelicals tend to speak of "knowing the Lord," a manner of speaking that is meant to convey immediacy—in the strict sense of not needing the mediation of history or culture or tradition or a priestly class. But that understandable desire for the immediate should not obscure the fact that traditional means of knowledge—the telling of the story, the "delivery" of the faith, the canon of Scripture, and any number of other things—are necessary prerequisites. Christians of all people really cannot do without tradition, and it is far better to face that fact consciously and honestly.

It seems strange to me that historians, of all people, should have become so disdainful of the past, including the past of their own profession, and the achievements of their predecessors. Why do we study the past? Do we do so only in order to disenchant ourselves, or release ourselves from the past's tutelary influence? Is our study of the past to be nothing more than an extension of modernity's bulldozing effort to master all of reality, so that time itself is desacralized and made to serve the needs of the Almighty Present? Or do we look to the past, as Gatsby did, for meaning that has fled from the disenchanted present? If so, should we not find a better way to look at tradition—not as the quintessence of hideboundness, but as a means by which we free ourselves from the tyranny of the present, with its peculiar obsessions, anxieties, and other forms of cognitive imprisonment? Are we mature enough to recognize that disenchantment is itself a form of enchantment, and that debunking, however necessary it may be at times, is an activity that ultimately leads nowhere?

The novelist John Dos Passos expressed very well the resource that the past can provide: "In times of change and danger when there is a quicksand of fear under men's reasoning, a sense of continuity with generations gone before can stretch like a lifeline across the scary present." Can we really say that the work of professional historians has contributed to this sense of continuity in our culture?

For all the attention given in recent years to the social context of discourse, remarkably little has been given to the way in which the context of modern academia shapes the way we think about the past. One of the really satisfying things about Peter Novick's 1988 book, *That Noble Dream*, his history of the American historical profession, is the way—despite its tendency toward relativism and complacency—it turns the armamentarium of critical historical scholarship against the activity of critical historical scholarship itself. One can't read the book and not come away with a deep sense of how much our sense of the past has been hopelessly muddled by the internal imperatives of the profession. It is by endless cycles of cutting and slashing, revising and revisioning, "neo"ing and "post"ing, interrogating and all the rest of the tedious professional jargon, that reputations are made, empires are built, careers are jumpstarted, and—not to put too fine a point on it—tenure is won and promotion secured. The dynamic of revisionism, a dynamic of churning, incessant novelty, serves the cause of academic careerism even more than it does the cause of political correctness. And such careerism and specialization has the effect of stamping out an appreciative sense of the past.

There also is something ultimately self-contradictory and self-defeating about the Emersonian-Fordist belief that tradition is a pernicious inhibiting force that can and should be overcome. As Alasdair MacIntyre has argued compellingly, much of the intellectual activity that we value is constituted by tradition—meaning that it exists within discursive traditions that are no less indispensable for being unacknowledged as such. The most vital traditions, in his view, are traditions of *argument*, in which a whole series of debates, disagreements, visions, and revisions are constituted around a certain set of assertions, perspectives, and questions. It is a misunderstanding, in this view, to see tradition as an inert body of propositions and customs passed along intact from one generation to the next. Tradition is the necessary medium—institutional, linguistic, social, cultural—within which fruitful intellectual and cultural activity is ren-

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dered possible. It is not just a chest of treasures, but also a web of debates.

Some aspects of MacIntyre's argument are overly academic, as if all the world were a seminar room. But his fundamental point, that radical antitraditionalism is just as unintelligible as radical individualism, and for exactly the same reasons, is right on point. Just as a baby cannot rear itself in isolation, so an argument cannot find voice without drawing on an enormous armory of resources that are the gift of the past. And he is right, too, to insist that tradition is not static. Even the faith once delivered to the saints needs to be expressed again and again, in fresh ways, with fresh words and fresh metaphors, to be made vital, compelling, and contemporary. There is a difference between tradition and traditionalism, a difference that the historian Jaroslav Pelikan—whose wonderful little book *The Vindication of Tradition* ought to be read by every historian today—has expressed unforgettably: "Tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living. And it is traditionalism that gives tradition such a bad name."

In Pelikan's view, the distinction between "tradition" and "insight" that Emerson made is not sustainable.

> A "leap of progress" is not a standing broad jump, which begins at the line of where we are now; it is a running broad jump through where we have been to where we go next. The growth of insight—in science, in the arts, in philosophy and theology—has not come through progressively sloughing off more and more of tradition, as though insight would be purest and deepest when it has finally freed itself of the dead past. It simply has not worked that way in the history of the tradition, and it does not work that way now. By including the dead in the circle of discourse, we enrich the quality of the conversation. Of course we do not listen only to the dead, nor are we a tape recording of the tradition. That really would be the dead faith of the living, not the living faith of the dead. But we do acquire the insight for which Emerson was pleading when we learn to interact creatively with the tradition which he was denouncing.

And Pelikan concludes with a charge, taken from Goethe:

> *What you have as heritage,*
> *Take now as task;*
> *For thus you will make it your own.*

All of which suggests how badly the critical and debunking mode of modern historiography falls short of what we really ought to be doing. Man does not live by critical discourse alone. We need to disassemble, from time to time, and clear away the brush. But we should do so in order to build.

The acknowledgment of tradition does not absolve us of the need to think for ourselves, and build things of our own. Instead, it helps us to recognize the work we are meant to do. Our heritage *is* our task. We cannot undertake the task without the benefit of the heritage. But it is by doing our task that we can come into the full possession of that heritage—thereby perpetuating the tradition as something living, rather than something moribund—and thereby making it possible for us to have a free and full relationship with the heritage, like that of a child who has fully grown up.

And when we build, we should strive to build things meant to last. Things that strive to imitate the permanency of the most lasting traditions, and graft themselves onto their grand trunk. Things that we have the power to set in motion, but whose full meaning is not likely to mature and unfold in our lifetime. We should accept that, exult in it, and approach our task in the same spirit that one sees exemplified in the parable of the sower, a spirit that cheerfully does its appointed share, and accepts that the harvest is for others to witness. When we make a clearing, we should do so not in order to enjoy the pleasure of weedwhacking, or otherwise working our will on the landscape, but in order to plant something. And what we plant should be something substantial. A sequoia, so to speak, and not merely the decorative flowers of a season.

The image of the sequoia has long been an irresistible subject for gifted writers, and no wonder. With its amazing size and longevity, and the silent majesty of the groves in which it grows, it seems the closest thing on the earth to an Edenic organism, which lives and grows without decay. Hence it is a particularly powerful symbol of what we might strive for in our labors. I thus conclude with three literary evocations of sequoias, which make different but related points.

First, there is the sense of the sequoia as the kind of object around which we should seek to organize our labors—as a focus, so to speak, for the sacrificial labor whose object is both permanence and cheerful impersonality. The poet Wendell Berry has expressed this disposition nicely in a poem called "Last Words":

> *Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.*
> *Say that your main crop is the forest*
> *that you did not plant*
> *that you will not live to harvest.*
> *Say that the leaves are harvested*
> *when they have rotted into the mold.*

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Plant sequoias. Or, as one might express it in a more conventionally Christian way, do what you do, as Bach did what he did, for the glory of God. And do it, as he did it, not only in the B-Minor Mass but in every partita, cantata, étude, and two-part invention. We approximate that, however feebly, not only when we try to write histories in ways that are worthy of becoming tradition, or a part of tradition. We do it whenever we contribute to the health of the permanent things, and live for things that transcend ourselves and our moment.

To do so requires a width and breadth of perspective on the human condition that are at the furthest possible distance from the perspectivism and narcissism of so much contemporary historiography. One has to come to such a task armed with a capacious metaphysics. Consider, then, another sequoia image, this from Mary Austin's luminous 1927 book, *Lands of the Sun*, describing her travels in the Sierras:

> The trees have each its own voice—a degree of flexibility or length of needles upon which the wind harps to produce its characteristic note. The traveler in the dark of mountain nights knows his way among them as by the street cries of his own city. . . . But there is one tree that is voiceless; it speaks, no doubt, but it speaks only to the austere mountain heads, to the mindful wind and the watching stars. It speaks as men speak to one another and are not heard by the little ants crawling over their boots. This is the big tree, the sequoia. In something less than a score of forest patches, the sequoia abides, out of some possible preglacial period, out of some past of which nothing is left to us but the fading memory of the giants in those days. The age of individual big trees can be computed in terms of human history. There are evidences written in the rings of these that they endured the drought which made the famine in the days of Ahab the king, against which Elijah prayed. These are growing trees whose seeds are fertile.
>
> One might make a very dramatic collocation of the rise and fall of empires against the life period of a single sequoia. . . .

We may not always be capable of taking what might be called a sequoia's-eye view of history—or speaking with that austere and lofty voice—but at least we can acknowledge that those heights and vistas are real. An awareness of them will condition and restrain what we make of the enthusiasms of the present.

Finally, a poem, an extraordinary poem, by the American poet Dana Gioia. It is called "Planting a Sequoia," and it describes just that. But it is also an enactment of a tradition, with the very kind of twist and adaptation that makes traditions live, and makes them even more vital. Gioia is of Sicilian descent, and relates in the poem a Sicilian custom, followed by his own father, of planting an olive or fig tree upon the birth of a first son, along with a piece of the discarded umbilical cord. The poem depicts a reenactment of that tradition—but with a difference. For Gioia's own son had died tragically of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

All afternoon my brothers and I have worked in the orchard,
Digging this hole, laying you into it, carefully packing the soil.
Rain blackened the horizon, but cold winds kept it over the Pacific,
And the sky above us stayed the dull gray
Of an old year coming to an end.

In Sicily a father plants a tree to celebrate his first son's birth—
An olive or a fig tree—a sign that the earth has one more life to bear.
I would have done the same, proudly laying new stock into my father's orchard,
A green sapling rising among the twisted apple boughs,
A promise of new fruit in other autumns.

But today we kneel in the cold planting you, our native giant,
Defying the practical custom of our fathers,
Wrapping in your roots a lock of hair, a piece of an infant's birth cord,
All that remains above earth of a first-born son,
A few stray atoms brought back to the elements.

We will give you what we can—our labor and our soil,
Water drawn from the earth when the skies fail,
Nights scented with the ocean fog, days softened by the circuit of bees,
We plant you in the corner of the grove, bathed in western light,
A slender shoot against the sunset.

And when our family is no more, all of his unborn brothers dead,
Every niece and nephew scattered, the house torn down,
His mother's beauty ashes in the air,
I want you to stand among strangers, all young and ephemeral to you,
Silently keeping the secret of your birth.

There are far too many things to be said about this poem. I offer a single observation. What Gioia has done here, both in the poem itself and in the act that the

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poem describes, is a luminous and haunting lesson in both the permanence and the adaptability of tradition. He has kept faith with his heritage. But he also has made it his own. And instead of planting a "practical" tree that will be productive within the range of his lifetime, he chose to plant a thin slip of a mighty tree, a tree whose lifetime will be measured in millennia—and whose full majesty and mature fruitfulness will never be seen by anyone now alive, or in any context that we can now imagine.

Such a noble gesture defies the spirit of our age. To forgo the pleasures of contemporary applause and aim one's acts at an audience yet to be born seems quixotic at best, and deluded at worst. But that gesture embodies what is best in us as human beings. Only in looking to the furthest horizons, and beyond, can we hope to redeem the brokenness of this life, making something fine and enduring out of what would otherwise be sheer meaninglessness. Despair is held at bay by the greater dignity of simple affirmation, of keeping faith with what one has loved.

In thereby adapting one tradition, the poem recalls another, which is best expressed in the soaring words of the prophet Isaiah:

> Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth; the former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. . . . I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years. . . . They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their descendants with them. (Isaiah 65:17-23)

The messianic vision promises us the world restored to what it should be, in which each lives in safety, under his own vine and fig tree, with the full complement of offspring. But our broken world, which so often falls bitterly short of that promise, must sometimes pay its respects obliquely. That may mean planting a different kind of tree, whose value is not in the fruit it bears or the shade it provides, but in the austere distance it marks between the promise and our own circumstances. We stand between the two, holding the tension between them in our minds and hearts, remembering the messianic hope, but not yet forgetting the former things. Not yet.

To do so is not only an act of love. It is also an act of faith. And a figure of hope. And an example worth following. FT

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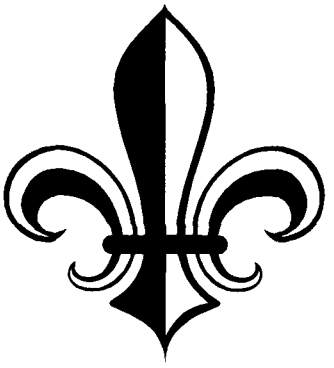
The Beauty of Holiness



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— Song of Solomon

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Books In Review

Distinguishing the Kingdoms

The West and the Rest: Globalization and the Terrorist Threat. By Roger Scruton. *ISI. 187 pp. $19.95.*

***Reviewed by* Peter C. Meilaender**

In the terrorist age we have now entered, the nations of the West are confronted, for the first time in the modern era, with a serious threat from outside the West itself. Yet how can we defend Western Civilization without first understanding what it is? *The West and the Rest,* the latest offering from Roger Scruton, the conservative British philosopher, seeks to help us understand ourselves, that we may better defend ourselves.

In this thin but penetrating volume, Scruton claims that the defining achievement of the West has been to resolve the "contest between religion and politics" by conceiving of the state as an independent source of human authority, deriving its legitimacy not from divine commands, but from the will of the citizens whom it represents. This disentanglement of politics from religion was made possible by Christianity. Ideas such as Augustine's theory of the two cities and the medieval doctrine of the two swords produced a Western conception of the state as an independent, secular jurisdiction. This conception, Scruton argues, is the necessary prerequisite of politics understood as a distinct human activity, rather than as simply the perpetuation of some other sort of activity (worship, for instance, or warfare) in another guise. The great advantage of such a view is to lay the groundwork for earthly peace. Even those who do not agree about the ultimate source of religious authority can mutually submit to the merely temporal jurisdiction of the earthly state.

If it is to allow diverse citizens to hammer out a common way of life, this state cannot rest upon traditional bases of loyalty such as kinship or creed. Because humans are communal beings, however, it must be grounded in some alternative form of membership. The territorial nation—larger than the kinship group, smaller than the universal church—provides this new experience of belonging and so lays a new foundation for political loyalty, directed now towards a "community of neighbors sharing language, customs, territory, and a common interest in defense." This community is represented by its own state, which bears a legal and corporate personality and acts as its agent, representing its permanent will across time. Thus the Christian distinction between the two kingdoms, having generated the need for an independent jurisdictional sphere in which to house secular political authority, culminates finally in the modern nation-state—the only context within which we have successfully and over an extended period of time maintained a stable political order that is representative, peaceful, and free.

This achievement of establishing the independent sphere of politics, Scruton argues, is what distinguishes the West from "the rest," and particularly from the Islamic world. Unlike Christianity, which distinguishes the things of Caesar from those of God, Islam recognizes neither "the state as an independent object of loyalty" nor "secular . . . jurisdiction as a genuine source of law"; on the contrary, it conceives of the universal divine law as a "fully comprehensive system of commands." It is thus unable to sustain politics as a distinct form of activity, resulting, as Scruton puts it, in the "confiscation of the political." This refusal to recognize any source of political authority independent of the divine command tends either to undermine the state altogether (whenever it is charged with having departed from an ideal of religious purity) or to usher in totalitarianism (since a state charged with implementing divine decrees must inevitably be concerned with our spiritual perfection).

Because this radically different conception of the political—or better, to use Scruton's terms, the absence of any real such conception—views political activity as merely an elaboration of the one, all-encompassing divine law, it necessarily "regards territorial jurisdiction and national loyalty as compromises with no intrinsic legitimacy of their own." It is hostile, in other words, to the crowning achievement of the West, the nation-state. What is more, these external foes of the nation-state find allies within the contemporary West. Beset from without by those who deny the legitimacy of merely man-made law, the nation-state is also under attack from within by proponents of globalization and transnational government who view it as an archaic remnant of a less enlightened past. They are joined by the carping adherents of what Scruton calls the "culture of repudiation," who assail the nation-state as a key element in the grim history of Western oppression. This account of the decline of national citizenship within the West amplifies Scruton's broader comparison of the West and the rest, and together these facets of his argument raise a call to arms in defense of the traditional nation-state.

I will leave to others the question whether Scruton's analysis of the character of the "rest," in particular of the Islamic world, is adequate, but his analysis of the West is noteworthy in

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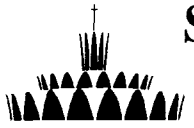
several ways. His insistence that loyalty, a neglected topic, ought to be a central concern of political philosophy is an important contribution to standard discussions of liberal democracy and offers a far more insightful path than most such discussions into the relationship between the individual, the community, and the state. Furthermore, though Scruton is hardly alone in recognizing the plight of the nation-state and of national sovereignty as defining questions of the contemporary world order, his strong defense of those institutions is welcome, for in intellectual debate they often have few friends.

In an important respect, however, his discussion is curiously unsatisfying. Scruton's argument hinges on the development, in the West, of a conception of political jurisdiction whose legitimacy is independent of religion, a development that he typically describes in terms of "secular law" or the "separation of church and state." These are familiar enough phrases, and few of Scruton's Western readers, Christian or otherwise, are likely to disagree that some such thing as secular law or the separation of church and state ought to exist. But the devil is in the details, and one wants to know precisely what Scruton means by such phrases. About this, however, he is disappointingly vague. At times, his description of the accommodation reached in the West between religion and politics sounds not merely as though Christianity has been prepared to recognize the legitimate sphere of the state, but as though it has been willing to subordinate itself to secular concerns. Thus he can refer, in a passage summarizing important parts of his argument, to the "absolute sovereignty" granted territorial jurisdiction—not the words I would have chosen to express the Christian conception.



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The difficulty in ascertaining Scruton's precise meaning in this respect is pervasive. Consider: he tells us that Western political culture "makes religion a concern of family and society, but not of the state" and that those who "see all law, all social identity, and all loyalty as issuing from a religious source cannot really form part of this political culture." In the very next sentences, however, he assures us that this does not require the "fanatical expulsion of faith from public institutions"; indeed, it is compatible with—of all things—prayer in public schools. Two pages later, he affirms that the precepts of Christianity "set limits to what the sovereign can command." This affirmation, however, follows an explicit reduction of those precepts to only the two overarching ones laid down by Christ, "to love God entirely and to love your neighbor as yourself" (he notes elsewhere that "doctrine is the least important part of religion"). Just what should the reader make of this?

SCRUTON HAS NOT, I think, said anything with which a Christian must disagree. But his meaning is not sufficiently clear for the Christian to assent unreservedly. His ambiguous language might reflect either of two positions. It might be part of a strategy to tame or domesticate Christianity by reining in the demands it makes on the faithful and scaling back its claim to sovereignty over all of the believer's life. Such a strategy would be familiar enough from the historical development of liberalism, in which thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke, and others concerned themselves greatly (and not without success) with reducing Christianity to a form they thought compatible with public order. Presumably, however, most Christians would resist such a strategy, and, in the face of a potentially watered-down faith, might even find themselves sympathizing with Muslim fears about the effects of

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Western secularism on religious belief.

Alternatively, Scruton's imprecise formulations might reflect a sophisticated set of distinctions among the private, the public, and the political. Such distinctions, if adequately formulated, could describe a political order that, while not deriving its own legitimacy directly from religion, nevertheless concerns itself with and sustains a public space in which religion flourishes as more than a merely private activity. This position would be considerably more attractive. If this is what Scruton has in mind, however, he has not fully laid it out in this book, opting too often instead for the by now tired language of "separation of church and state."

This is not only frustrating, it is unfortunate, particularly coming from such an insightful thinker and in such a valuable book. For in our day, talk of the separation of church and state functions primarily as an excuse for careless theorizing—something Scruton normally scrupulously avoids. It provides us with an easy way out, a way of avoiding the more challenging task of constructing a richer, more nuanced set of distinctions. For what Christian thought has really done has not been to separate church and state, but rather to distinguish them—or, more precisely, to distinguish between the City of God and the City of Man, which is not exactly the same thing. Speaking of the "separation of church and state" encourages the mistaken assumption that the state can sustain itself, chugging along indefinitely under its own power, without needing to maintain, or even recognize, the foundations upon which it rests.

Scruton's own argument warns against such shortsightedness. His excellent discussion of the territorial loyalty without which the modern nation-state is unthinkable shows, as he emphasizes, that we neglect such pre-political loyalties at our peril. Similarly, if Scruton is right—as I think he is—that the vision of politics as a distinct, limited form of human activity owes its existence to conceptual possibilities opened up by Christianity, then the continued vitality of Christianity cannot be a matter of political indifference. That is not to say that the state itself must again become openly religious. It is to say, though, that the categories in which these distinctions are discussed—private and public, individual and social, cultural and political—require more thorough elaboration.

All who agree with Scruton that the achievements of representative government and the modern nation-state are not to be lightly abandoned will want to join him in that task of elaboration. But our labors will be in vain if we can distinguish Christianity from Islam only in a tepid or marginalized form. For such a faith will not only fail to sustain the institutions we cherish; it will also appear to confirm that the West is indeed as soulless as its enemies claim.

A Dog Named Spot

Flannery O'Connor: A Life. By Jean W. Cash. *University of Tennessee Press. 392 pp. $30.*

***Reviewed by* Paul Mankowski**

Writing of her mother, Flannery O'Connor once told a friend, "I always thought that if she had a dog she'd name him Spot—without irony. If I had a dog I'd name him Spot, with irony. But for all practical purposes no one would know the difference."

By its nature, irony is the most ephemeral of literary devices, and the wit, or malice, or affection it encrypts is inherently fugitive. Authors who trade in such wares must content themselves with a small audience even among their contemporaries, and the truly discerning readership inevitably diminishes with every passing year.

If Flannery O'Connor's work has suffered mischief at the hands of critics and commentators, her relentless-

Paul Mankowski, S.J., *teaches at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.*

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ly mordant irony and deadpan self-mockery are partly to blame. She expressed her deepest affections in a prose so sardonic as to seem like abuse to the inattentive. "I come from a family," she said, "where the only emotion respectable to show is irritation. In some this tendency produces hives, in others literature. In me both." Few readers share her religious and political sympathies; fewer still her delight in the violently incongruous. She relished life in the South not in spite of but, in part, because of its homegrown absurdities. A self-described "hillbilly Thomist," she made the heroes of her fiction not Catholics but Protestants—radical nonconformists, more accurately—who are in perpetual collision with the complacent heathendom that surrounds them. Perhaps the most explicit statement of her authorial intent is found in a 1963 letter written to a nun:

> To a lot of Protestants I know, monks and nuns are fanatics, none greater. And to a lot of monks and nuns I know, my Protestant prophets are fanatics. For my part, I think the only difference between them is that if you are a Catholic and have this intensity of belief, you join the convent and are heard from no more; whereas if you are a Protestant and have it, there is no convent for you to join and you go about in the world getting into all sorts of trouble and drawing the wrath of people who don't believe anything much at all down on your head. . . . When you leave a man alone with his Bible and the Holy Ghost inspires him, he's going to be a Catholic one way or another, even though he knows nothing about the visible church. His kind of Christianity may not be socially desirable, but it will be real in the sight of God.

O'Connor loathed sentimentalism wherever she found it triumphant. She shocked many fellow Catholics by her contempt for the now smug, now defensive churchmanship current in her day. She repelled, and continues to repel, many scholars and critics by her uncompromising orthodoxy. Her reply to Mary McCarthy's dinner party warble that the Eucharistic host is "a nice symbol" is well known: "If it's a symbol, to hell with it." Less well known, but more characteristic both in style and substance, is a 1959 letter in which she responds to a friend's

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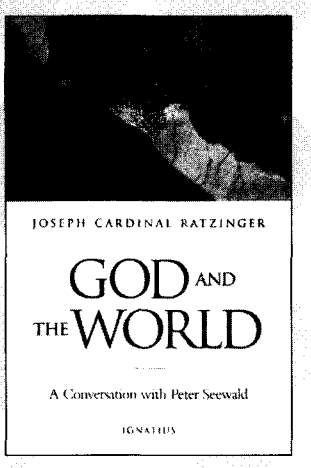
misgivings about the Catholic teaching on contraception:

> The Church's stand on birth control is the most absolutely spiritual of all her stands and with all of us being materialists at heart, there is little wonder that it causes unease. I wish various fathers would quit trying to defend it by saying that the world can support forty billion. I will rejoice in the day when they say: This is right, whether we all rot on top of each other or not, dear children, as we certainly may. Either practice restraint or be prepared for crowding.

O'Connor was a political conservative; an integrationist; an amateur painter; a NASCAR racing fan; a despiser of Anaïs Nin, Tennessee Williams, and self-regarding aestheticism generally. She raised poultry; she read de Lubac and Teilhard de Chardin. Fiercely inimical to the practice of approaching fiction as encoded autobiography, she gave few interviews, and refused to gratify journalistic curiosity about her personal life. In brief, she presents a challenging and paradoxical subject even to her admirers, and it was with a sense of pleasant anticipation that I opened Jean W. Cash's biography, *Flannery O'Connor: A Life.*

It is a bitter disappointment. To begin with, it is distressingly ill-written: ponderous, trite, tediously repetitious, and burdened throughout by a kind of master's thesis nervousness that shows itself in quotes that illuminate nothing and arguments for points that require no proof. To do her justice, the author worked under unusually grave disadvantages; O'Connor's literary executors refused Cash permission to quote previously unpublished material, including letters, juvenilia, draft manuscripts, and other essential sources. Such a handicap would be daunting to any biographer; to one engaged in literary biography, it is all but fatal. Cash was obliged to rewrite her text and paraphrase in many places where she had quoted O'Connor directly. The result is awful, though excusable, in the early chapters that deal with O'Connor's girlhood. It is awful, and inexcusable, in the chapters that treat of her high school and college days, where we get not only synopses of O'Connor's early stories but prolix descriptions of the cartoons she submitted to the school paper.

GOD AND THE WORLD



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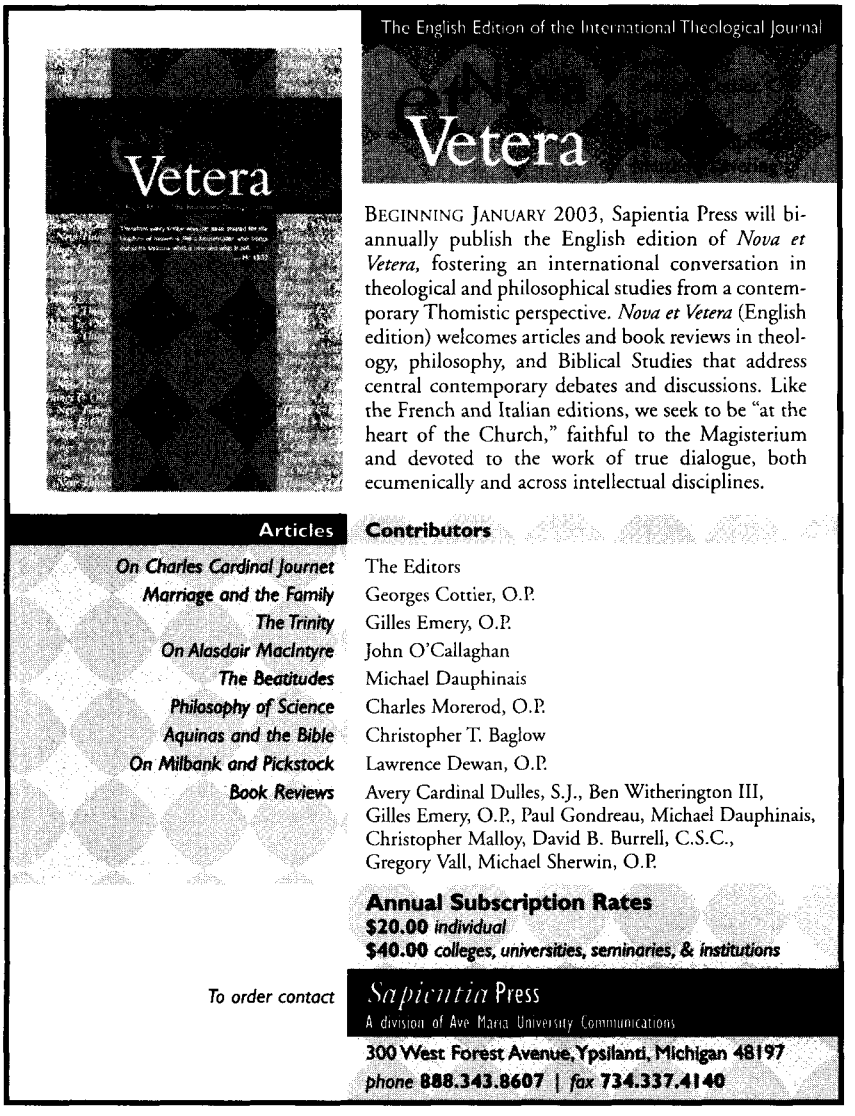
Cash admires her subject and clearly wants to arrive at a sympathetic understanding of her convictions and enthusiasms. Yet the critical tools at her disposal—sociology, psychology, the uncouth lexicon of gender studies—are not fitted to the task. When Cash writes that O'Connor's faith "transcended the boundaries of the Roman Catholicism into which she was indoctrinated at an early age," she probably intends it as a compliment, but it betrays a certain obtuseness toward O'Connor and the world of her intellect and imagination. Regarding a satiric story O'Connor (even then with her tongue in her cheek) wrote in high school, Cash says, "Having her heroine kiss chickens instead of boys may show Mary Flannery's deliberate rejection of sexuality." Here and throughout the reader feels he's watching someone trying to assemble an F-15 with a spatula.

In a few places Cash's own pieties cloud her view of her subject so greatly as to result in distortion. She is clearly jittery about O'Connor's candor on issues of racial conflict, a candor she does not permit herself. In her discussion of O'Connor's story, "Everything That Rises Must Converge" (whose title was taken from an idea found in Teilhard de Chardin), Cash writes: "She told several of her correspondents . . . that she was using Teilhard's 'proposition' to 'comment on a certain topical issue in these parts.'" This struck me as wrong and perplexing, given O'Connor's insistence that fiction—good fiction, anyway—can never be a covert exercise in propaganda or essay-writing. Addressing a college writing class, she once said: "Whether you write to make money or to express your soul or to insure civil rights or to irritate your grandmother will be a matter for you and your analyst, and the point of the departure for this discussion will be the good of the written work."

So I looked up the sole letter that Cash cites as a reference for her quote. It reads: "[The story] is called 'Everything That Rises Must Converge' and touches on a certain topical issue in these parts." They're close, but they don't say the same thing. A work of fiction can touch on, can even situate itself in, a topical issue, without *being used* to comment on it, without becoming a means to an end other than itself. Her quotation marks notwithstanding, I don't believe Cash intentionally altered O'Connor here; it is more likely that, as a well-wisher, her desire to enlist O'Connor in the cause of enlightenment momentarily got the better of scholarly accuracy.

CASH'S POWERS OF detachment likewise fail her on the subject of feminism, another issue for which she has considerably more enthusiasm than her subject. Writing to Betty Hester, a regular correspondent and somewhat demented feminist, O'Connor said,

> On the subject of the feminist business, I just never think, that is never think of qualities which are specifically feminine or masculine. I divide people into two classes: the Irksome and the Non-Irksome without regard to sex. Yes and there are the Medium Irksome and the Rare Irksome.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On a later occasion, in a letter to Cecil Dawkins about the same Betty Hester, she wrote:

> Her letters seem pretty high to me these days. She is making all sorts of discoveries about the difference between men and women—a subject which interests her inordinately. Her latest discovery which will revolutionize human thought is that woman are bigger than men. I listens, but I never get it.

Cash gets it, apparently, and repeats the speculation of feminist critic Louise Westling: "If Flannery O'Connor had lived long enough for the feminist movement to arouse her awareness of society's injustices to women and of her own repressed rage, surely she would have confronted these problems consciously in her stories."

It's hard to imagine a more perverse, more gratuitously wrong-headed reading of a compatriot and approximate contemporary (O'Connor died in 1964). Yet Cash does Westling one better when she suggests that O'Connor's villain-clowns—bogus intellectuals like Wesley in "Greenleaf" and Hulga in "Good County People"—are meant to be mouthpieces of legitimate artistic protest against the constraints of rural domesticity. Those who have long loved Flannery O'Connor will wince, but perhaps the ironist was reconciled even to her failures: her dog is still named Spot, and almost nobody sees the joke.

Cash makes no contribution to our understanding of O'Connor the writer, but it hardly matters; her writing is its own most eloquent expositor. That said, Cash does perform a valuable service in forcefully making the case that O'Connor was not a lesbian, crypto- or otherwise, contra many in the contemporary Lit Crit business ("She died unmarried at 39, ergo . . ."). This is an area in which O'Connor cannot answer for herself, and Cash's interviews and arguments conclusively rebut the charge. Hers is an entirely honorable accomplishment, and, while it doesn't make the book worth buying, or reading, let it be reckoned unto her as righteousness.

A Francis for Our Times

Reluctant Saint: The Life of Francis of Assisi. By Donald Spoto. *Viking Compass. 256 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by **Russell Hittinger**

No saint has been the subject of more hagiography than Francis of Assisi, and no founder has had his or her legacy more determined by biographers. Unlike Benedict, Francis did not convince his followers, if he convinced himself, that a written rule transcends the personality of the founder. Close to his death, he wrote a last *Testament* exhorting his brothers to obey the Rule of 1223 "without gloss" even while suggesting that his final precepts and exhortations constituted just such a gloss. Unlike Ignatius of Loyola, who shrewdly prepared an autobiography to frame the boundaries of interpretation, Francis did not exert preemptive control over his own story. His contemporaries were acutely aware of the problem.

Within weeks of Francis' death in 1226, Pope Gregory IX ordered Thomas of Celano to write a biography supplying evidence for canonization. Celano's work, completed in 1228, is magnificent. No medieval hagiographer better satisfied the need for historical "facts" and for hagiographical "types" (David, Elijah, Antony the Hermit). But Celano, who had the advantage of knowing the founder and several of the original companions, was not satisfied that he had the story quite right. Alternative legends and collections were produced inside and outside the Order. The biographical battles had begun. Thomas of Celano felt it necessary to write not only another biography but

Russell Hittinger *holds the Warren Chair of Catholic Studies at the University of Tulsa.*

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also a collection of miracle stories which, for all practical purposes, constituted yet a third.

Soon, every faction in the Order had its own *legenda*. In 1260, Bonaventure was commissioned to write the "official" biography. For good measure, he ended up writing not one but two. Desperate to control the ever burgeoning industry of Franciscan hagiography and to install the Bonaventurian legend as canonical, the General Chapter of Pisa ordered in 1263 that "all the legends of the Blessed Francis that have been made should be removed." The brothers were told to track down and remove material even in libraries outside the Order. It was a futile policy. Today, for example, the most widely read "early" Franciscan material is the *Fioretti*, the "Little Flowers of St. Francis." These stories were collected at least a century after Francis' death, and consist of precisely the kind of literature that the Chapter of Pisa wished to intercept.

Seven hundred years later, two things remain constant: first, the primacy of Francis' life, and second, the futility of trying to produce a canonical version of that life.

In *Reluctant Saint: The Life of Francis of Assisi*, Donald Spoto claims to make "recent research" on Francis available to the "general reader who is not a specialist." The reader is promised the real Francis, out of the "bird bath," liberated from sentimental pieties and official-sounding apologetics. There is hardly anything new in this approach, which has been the standard biographical mode for Francis since the late nineteenth century. The only new information is the author's suggestion that the stigmata were leprous lesions, neither externally imprinted (as Bonaventure contended), nor internally produced as a result of Francis' identification with the crucified Christ (as some contemporary scholars, such as Chiara Frugoni, contend). For Spoto, we should be satisfied with the idea that the stigmata were the corporeal sign of Francis' solidarity with the lepers. In *God's Fool* (1983), Julien Green deftly treats the problem of the stigmata in a mere three pages, pointing out that whatever we want to learn beyond the testimony of Francis' beloved disciple and companion, Brother Leo, who was with the saint at Mount La Verna, is "God's secret."

Despite re-mythologizing the stigmata along the lines of social justice, Spoto is no religious skeptic. He gives a serious account of Francis' religious conversion, his Christocentric spirituality, and, above all, his profound and

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disturbing self-emptying at the end of his life. Francis' biographers have always emphasized what can only be called the "grand gesture": Francis divesting himself of his clothes and renouncing his father in the bishop's court; his adventures as a vagabond in the valleys of Umbria, preaching to the birds and negotiating a contract between a wolf and the town of Gubbio; and his trip to Egypt to convert the heathen, challenging the Sultan to a trial by fire. Spoto, however, will not let the reader be distracted from Francis' ongoing conversion, especially during the dark crucible of the last six years, which seemed to be "a long struggle with futility." Ruined physically by blindness, malaria, cancers, and leprosy, and unable to govern his own Order, which was already breaking into factions, Francis' spiritual mettle was truly tested. Earlier, he had told his brothers that God "wanted me to be a new kind of fool in this world." At the end, Francis was anything but a carefree troubadour.

I HAVE TWO COMPLAINTS about the book. First, Spoto takes the sting out of the poverty issue. From the time Francis presented himself in the court of Innocent III in 1209, to the ratification of his Rule in 1223, everyone understood that the renunciation of communal property and dominion was the most distinctive aspect of Francis' "religious" way of life. It was in this that he broke decisively not only with the inherited feudal character of the monastic tradition, but also with the emerging culture of commerce and bourgeois civilization. Spoto correctly notes that in that time radical poverty expressed discontent with the affluence of monks and clergy, and, in the case of the Cathars, a Manichean-like rejection of the created, corporeal world. He wishes to rescue Francis from such a rejection of the flesh, and so he tends to interpret the *poverello* in the direction of poverty of spirit. But in so doing, he never brings into view Francis' material poverty and its importance for what used to be called "contempt" of the world. It is true that Francis had little appetite for strict regulation, but he never hesitated to command material and communal poverty. His brothers were forbidden even to touch money.

Spoto is well within the mainstream of Catholic thinking today, with its emphasis upon "right use" and "poverty of spirit," but it won't work for Francis. Material and communal poverty was the very thing to which he wanted to give "religious" form. For Francis, the ancient theme of the

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vir apostolicus, the apostolic man or type, was not merely going about "doing good" and "preaching" as Spoto would have it. Francis took literally Jesus' command to the disciples to take neither gold nor silver, to carry no purse or sack, bread or staff (Matthew 10). Whatever we make of Francis' exegesis of this and other passages of Scripture, one thing is certain. He did not regard material, communal poverty as an instrumental value, something that merely facilitates preaching and renders easier a true poverty of spirit. Rather, he believed that such poverty somehow enters into the very thing preached. It was a dangerous and seemingly impracticable position then, and is almost incomprehensible today. The remarkable thing is that during his brief lifetime Francis managed to convince two popes and one future pope, Gregory IX, of the virtue of this idea.

Second, if Spoto gives us a less than radical Francis on the question of poverty, we do get a Francis on the margins of institutional power and respectability. Spoto imposes a familiar modern "type" on the story. The authenticity of a life is disclosed precisely in its differentiation, if not alienation, from power and institutional authority. For Spoto, Francis inaugurates an alternative to the "centralized, legalistic, politicized, militarized Roman system." Benedictine monasticism is characterized pejoratively as the "primacy of authority over love." Jesus' call to his disciples "was not religious—it was resoundingly secular." While the reader is warned about the "general untrustworthiness" of Bonaventure's "official" life of Francis, the film director Federico Fellini is praised for being "suffused with a deeply Franciscan sensibility." Even with respect to his own fraternity, Spoto only allows Francis to be a "so-called founder." So much for the Order of Friars Minor, though this, too, is a long-standing theme in literature about Francis. These dualisms—love and power, service and control, lay and clerical, to mention only a few that recur in the book—are far too easy. Moreover, they evoke in the reader the prejudice that the life of the "spirit" begins where "official" institutions end.

IT IS A POWERFUL WAY to tell Francis' story, but not always correct at the level of historical fact. For example, when Francis abruptly departed from Egypt in the winter of 1219/1220, Spoto has him returning because of anxiety about Roman "control" of his fraternity. In fact, he rushed home because his own brothers were changing what was then the unwritten Rule. Francis appealed to Roman authority to help subdue the innovators. Few medieval saints had such powerful and sympathetic patrons in Rome as did Francis. He charmed them from the beginning, and relied on their support in moments of crisis.

Other points are half-truths. In his actual writings, Francis used the terms "clerical" and "lay" to mean literate and illiterate. His original intention was to admit illiterates as full-fledged brothers. This does not imply that he wished to found a "lay" community, which is to say, a community not under "religious" vows. Although Spoto is correct that Francis dropped the traditional language of superiors as abbots and priors in favor of the more egalitarian "ministers" and "custodians," the new Order was exceedingly hierarchical and centralized. The Rule of 1223 begins: "Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to our Lord Pope Honorius and his successors canonically elected and to the Roman Church. Let the other brothers be bound to obey Francis and his successors."

The brothers were thus incorporated through the head, who pledged his obedience to the Apostolic See. Not even the abbot of Cluny, with nearly a thousand dependent monasteries, could command such an uncomplicated title and line of authority. Francis was less than pleased with some parts of the 1223 Rule, but he entirely approved of its hierarchical structure. Whereas Spoto seems to think they are opposites, the 1223 Rule is a case study in the symbiosis of centralization and egalitarianism. Once "religious" conceived of themselves more

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as brothers rather than as sons (or daughters), religious life became amenable to the tools and attitudes of centralization—to what, in a general sense, we would call "modern" polity. As the Franciscan scholar Cajetan Esser has pointed out, Francis himself wrote more about authority than poverty.

Spoto imposes a modern type on the story of a late-medieval soul. We should be surprised if it were otherwise. But he gives us only one aspect of that "type," namely the drama of life-affirming suffering threatened with defeat at the hands of law and institutions. The other aspects, including the ambition to create a new order among brothers, and Francis' curious but unwavering reliance upon law and international authority to create such an order, are not given their due.

The Case for Paradise

Heaven: The Logic of Eternal Joy. By Jerry L. Walls. *Oxford University Press. 224 pp. $35.*

***Reviewed by* Richard J. Mouw**

In my early days of teaching introductory philosophy courses, I always lectured on Socrates' understanding of the immortality of the soul. I would lead my students through the dialogue recorded in Plato's *Phaedo*, where Socrates explains to his friends why he can face death so calmly. The body is the prison-house of the soul, he argued, and at the moment of death the soul is released from those bodily desires that have kept it from pursuing its proper business of rational contemplation.

I looked at my old lecture notes recently, and it is clear that I did not think too highly of the Socratic position. I would tell my students about the stark contrast that the theologian Oscar Cullmann had drawn between the death of Socrates and the death of Jesus. Unlike the Athenian philosopher, Cullmann noted, Jesus did not face death calmly. In Gethsemane, he sweat drops of blood as he thought about the ordeal he would soon endure. And on the Cross he cried out in agony, quoting a psalm that speaks of divine abandonment.

From a biblical perspective, I would tell my students, death is an enemy. Our hope for an afterlife is not grounded in any confidence of an indestructible soul. If we are ever to

Richard J. Mouw *is President and Professor of Christian History at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California.*

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2003 PRUIT MEMORIAL SYMPOSIUM

"The Schooled Heart: Moral Formation in American Higher Education"

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30 - SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2003

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Stanley Hauerwas, Duke University Divinity School

PLENARY SPEAKERS
David Lyle Jeffrey, Baylor University
Warren Nord, University of North Carolina
Joseph O'Hare, Fordham University
Julie Reuben, Harvard Graduate School of Education
David Solomon, University of Notre Dame

Program Description:
Many argue that American higher education no longer provides a coherent moral vision, constituting a critical problem for contemporary culture. Applied ethics courses, initiatives for teaching ethics across the curriculum, service learning programs, and "great texts" curricula have all been identified as solutions. But are these responses adequate? To what resources might we turn for developing serious moral education, and for what aims? What, if any, constraints should exist on moral education in American higher education? What strengths or weaknesses does religious affiliation provide for moral education? How does an institution's religious identity shape its purposes and programs related to character development? In what way ought this task to be taken up within the academic disciplines? "The Schooled Heart" will explore these and related questions about moral formation within the context of American higher education.

This announcement invites contributed papers for concurrent sessions.
In addition to individual papers, session proposals on particular topics are encouraged. Historical, philosophical, theological, literary, psychological, educational and other disciplinary perspectives are welcome.

Abstracts of 500-750 words for contributed papers/panels should be submitted by **April 30, 2003**, and should include title, author(s), mailing address, e-mail address, text of abstract, and position. Please send by mail to the Baylor Institute for Faith and Learning, PO Box 97270, Waco, TX 76798, or by email to IFL@baylor.edu.

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live again, it is only because of the hope of the resurrection of the body. And that means, I would go on, that eternal life should not be understood in terms of a passive, disembodied contemplation of the divine, but rather of an active resurrected embodied life. "We're going to *do* stuff," I would proclaim from my classroom podium. "The Coming Age will be an *active* mode of being: problem-solving, relationship-building, communal projects. The Book of Revelation says that we will *reign* in New Creation."

Now that I have grown much older, it makes me tired even to think about what I so passionately advocated in those days. I'm not sure I want to "*do* stuff" for all eternity. Passive contemplation doesn't seem nearly as bad as it once did. I'm not convinced, though, that my evolution can be explained purely in terms of my personal psychology. The broader theological culture has also changed since my early days as a teacher. The theologians of the 1960s and '70s, young *and* old, were generally quite down on the "other-worldly." The activist mood of the day called for a theology in which "praxis" loomed large on the Christian agenda. It was quite convenient, then, to project a lot of "doing stuff" onto the afterlife as well. The biblical scholars helped the cause along by insisting that "embodiment" is the key for understanding our humanness. The Old Testament, they said, would have nothing to do with the idea of a disembodied soul. We *are* our bodies, so it should not surprise us that the New Testament's focus on the hope of the resurrection is in fact a celebration of our physicality. As embodied creatures we can look forward to an eternity in which we will be raised up in order to . . . well, in order to *do* stuff.

I learned some helpful lessons from those emphases. But I am much less inclined these days to see this picture as the best overall account of what it means to live in this world or to

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anticipate the world to come. Nor am I alone in having altered my focus. As we all know, there has been a renewed interest in recent times in "spiritual" pursuits. And there is also considerable attention being paid to the afterlife, including the more disembodied conceptions of what might happen to us after we die. In the past decade or so we have been blessed with some important books dealing with what past theologians labeled *personal eschatology*—for example, two studies of the "history" of heaven have been published, as well as an important anthology of writings about heaven. Attention has also been given to the possible connection between "out of body" experiences and post mortem survival—as in Carol Zaleski's marvelous little book, *The Life of the World to Come: Near-Death Experience and Christian Hope.*

Jerry Walls' *Heaven: The Logic of Eternal Joy* is an important addition to this growing body of scholarly literature. It is an excellent example of how a number of Christian philosophers, many of whom, like Walls, are evangelical Protestants, have been employing the tools of analytic philosophy to significant theological topics. They have realized that it is not enough simply to show the inadequacy of various objections to Christian beliefs. It is also necessary to develop robust accounts of the positive dimensions of Christian thought. And this necessitates, in the words of the Yale philosopher Marilyn McCord Adams, "mounting theological theories" that demonstrate a Christian understanding of "moral value and the human good." Adams herself has taken on this assignment in creative ways, in the company of, among others, the Oxford professor Richard Swinburne. The result has been some fascinating studies of such topics as sin, the Atonement, and the Incarnation.

Walls himself has been focusing primarily on eschatological topics. His latest book is a follow-up to his *Hell: The Logic of Damnation*, published in 1992. The use of "the logic of" in the subtitles of both books gives a good clue to his basic intentions. He wants to provide a rationale for accepting a Christian conception of life after death. More specifically, Walls wants to explore the seriousness of the portrayal, in both the Bible and the Christian tradition, of the afterlife as a place of moral and spiritual accounting—a mode of existence in which those who have resisted God's purposes in the world receive their due, while those who have benefited from God's saving

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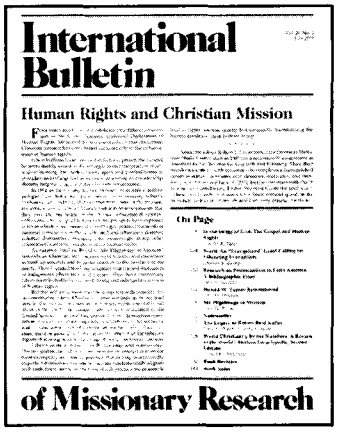

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mercies receive an even fuller measure of those mercies in the experience of "eternal joy."

Critics of Christianity have typically been especially dismissive of the idea of heaven. Often their objections to the heavenly state are expressive of what John Courtney Murray called the mood of "postulational atheism"; they simply take it for granted that theism is not a plausible way of interpreting reality—which allows them to reject out of hand Christian eschatology in particular as an elaborate "pie-in-the-sky" fantasy. Walls is bold in responding to such an outlook. Not only is it reasonable to believe in heaven, he argues, but the question of an afterlife is actually the most important issue a human being can face. Citing Pascal's insistence that "all of our actions and thoughts must follow such different paths, according to whether there is hope of eternal blessing or not," he makes a powerful case for the view that "to recover heaven as a positive moral source is to recover our very humanity." If it is not possible to have an eternal relationship with the One who alone can satisfy our deepest longings, then our lives have no real point. Of course, it is always possible simply to accept the conclusion that human existence is pointless, as it is also possible to insist that what believers take to be our deepest longings are in fact neurotic impulses that ought to be kept under wraps. But these alternatives cannot be established without considerable argument and—as Walls shows—the arguments need to be formulated with an honest acknowledgment of the explanatory power of the Christian web of beliefs.

Walls gives much attention to that larger web of beliefs in which the hope for heaven is nested. In the process he sets forth views on a variety of theological topics. Walls teaches at Asbury Seminary, and it is not difficult to discern his Wesleyan perspective at work in his probings. But he did earn a doctorate under the tutelage of the Catholic and Reformed philosophers at Notre Dame, and those influences can also be detected. All of this produces some interesting doctrinal combinations—as in his strong defense of purgatory as a doctrine that ought to be integrated into Protestant theology. Here, I must confess, I remain unconvinced. Actually, I happened to read Walls' chapter on purgatory shortly after hearing, on a day during Advent, Handel's dramatic rendition of the Pauline insistence that "we will all be changed, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

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While I recognize the need to take Walls' intriguing arguments on the subject seriously, I did gratefully receive Handel's message as a providential sign that my Calvinist defenses would hold against the onslaught.

Walls discusses a variety of other topics that have traditionally engaged both philosophers and theologians—among them the problem of evil, personal identity, and moral justification. But he also explores some newer territory. He argues convincingly, for example, that recent studies of "near death experiences" (NDE) merit more careful attention from philosophers and theologians than they have been given thus far. Here he continues the important discussion that Carol Zaleski has initiated in her writings on the subject. He rightly pushes Zaleski for further clarification on the question of what the reports of NDEs might mean for understanding "what is really going on" in terms of the life of the human spirit. Walls is clearly not satisfied with what he takes to be Zaleski's ambivalence about the question of whether NDEs constitute an "epistemic contact with the reality they attempt to describe." On the one hand, she wants to insist that the reports of NDEs are "really" about what is going on in people's imaginations—they are using the symbols and images available to them, she says, to describe something that has occurred within their psyches. But she also believes that God is revealing something to them about an extra-subjective reality by means of NDEs.

Walls insists that Zaleski's case, as sympathetic as it is to Christian teaching, does not provide an adequate response to the naturalistic reductionists who see NDEs as having no relevance for learning the truth about an afterlife. But it is hard to see how his own suggestions improve on her discussion. She clearly demonstrates that the imagery employed in NDE reports is culturally conditioned. Contemporary reports, for example, tend to focus exclusively on blissful kinds of encounters, while medieval testimonies make much of the element of testing, and even torment and doom. And in any given period there is considerable variation in the imagery used in these reports.

We can improve on Zaleski's account, Walls proposes, by building on the epistemological theory developed by Alvin Plantinga, William Alston, and others. They insist that our basic human cognitive equipment has been designed by God in such a way that we really can form reliable beliefs about spiritual realities. Walls applies this perspective to NDEs: when people who recover from, say, a coma remember meeting a comforting divine presence, they can be reasonably certain "that it was indeed God who encountered them, assured them of His love, allowed them to return to this life, and the like."

All well and good. But it is difficult to see how this improves on Zaleski's analysis of the status of the *imagery* involved in these experiences. Are people who report NDEs also warranted in believing that, say, the passage to eternity requires moving through a real tunnel? Or that in seeing their whole life pass before their eyes they were actually seeing the "real" events of their childhood? Obviously not. What it all comes down to—or so it seems—is that if one believes in God and the afterlife one can reasonably accept reports of NDEs as reliable signs of the presence of a caring God, even if the imagery that dominates those experiences is contained "within" one's own psyche.

Even if there is much more to be said on this and other subjects that he takes on, Walls has done a fine job of showing us how the study of the afterlife deserves to be featured more prominently in contemporary theological discussion. The topic is intellectually fascinating. And it certainly concerns all of us in the most practical of ways, for heaven's sake.

Hegemonic Hesitations

American Empire. By Andrew J. Bacevich. *Harvard University Press. 302 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by **James Nuechterlein**

Andrew Bacevich's *American Empire* has to rank at or near the top of nominees for Most Frustrating Book of the Year. It is, on the one hand, a cautionary reminder. In a time when most everyone concedes, as if it were nothing out of the ordinary, that America's role in the world constitutes some variation of empire, it is useful to note, as Bacevich does, how rapidly this transformation has occurred and how radically it breaks from the nation's previous self-understanding. More than that, it is salutary to be warned of empire's risks. Even—or perhaps especially—those who think of modern U.S. hegemony as benign need always to keep in mind Bacevich's insistence that power can both blind and corrupt, and that there is no reason casually to assume that America's empire will escape the political, strategic, and moral pitfalls that have beset all empires before it.

At the same time, however, *American Empire* is a maddeningly elusive, not to say evasive, book. Its ideological presuppositions are difficult to specify: the author takes his theoretical framework from the radical historians Charles Beard and William Appleman Williams, but much of his cultural critique of modern American society carries echoes of Pat Buchanan. (The reader is often left uncertain as to whether Bacevich is speaking in his own voice or is simply passing along the views of others, but I take it as significant that he has been an early contributor to Buchanan's new journal, the *American Conservative.*) Bacevich's tone is critical and skeptical throughout, but while he provides ample evi-

James Nuechterlein *is Editor of* First Things.

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dence that he opposes America's flirtation with empire, he will not say so directly. He seems clearly unsympathetic to America's current role and behavior in the world, but he is entirely unclear as to what alternatives, if any, should be put in their place. His voice is now dispassionate, now disapproving, now impossible to penetrate. It is difficult to engage an author whose prevailing rhetorical strategy is the bob and weave.

On one point, at least, Bacevich *is* clear. The American empire did not develop, as has been said of its British predecessor, in a fit of absence of mind. American leaders since the end of the Cold War have in fact "adhered to a well-defined grand strategy." From George Bush 41 through Bill Clinton through George Bush 43, America has acted in the world with "a clearly defined purpose in mind."

> That purpose is to preserve and, where both feasible and conducive to U.S. interests, to expand an American imperium. Central to this strategy is a commitment to global openness—removing barriers that inhibit the movement of goods, capital, ideas, and people. Its ultimate objective is the creation of an open and integrated international order based on the principles of democratic capitalism, with the United States as the ultimate guarantor of order and enforcer of norms.

This "strategy of openness" is not actually new—its origins trace at least to the turn of the twentieth century—and Bacevich does not claim to be the first to have discerned it. Here he invokes Beard and Williams. Beard, who was a relentless economic determinist, explained American entry into World War II as a result of Franklin Roosevelt's efforts to divert attention from the ineffectuality of the New Deal on the domestic front. Rather than admit the failure of capitalism and pursue socialism, FDR—like other Presidents before him—sought to solve domestic problems by overseas economic expansion. That policy, Beard concluded, could have no long-term effect other than perpetual conflict abroad and militarism at home. An expansionist America would become Sparta.

Elaborating on Beard's analysis, Williams argued that ever since the closing of the frontier in the 1890s American leaders had seen foreign trade and investment as "the sine qua non of domestic prosperity and social peace." Seeking in effect an empire without burdens, they focused on "commercial access," or, as Williams variously phrased it, "open-door expansionism" and "non-colonial imperial expansion." Beard's attack on FDR after World War II had garnered little support—indeed it badly damaged his reputation—but, as protest against America's policies in Vietnam mounted in the 1960s, Williams became a beacon of the left and his revisionist account of U.S. responsibility for the origins of the Cold War gained widespread acceptance in the academic world.

Bacevich concedes that Beard and Williams were more wrong than right about the origins of World War II and the Cold War, but whatever their errors on specifics, he says, they had the big picture clearly in focus. Thus his conclusion on Williams' project: "Building on insights first developed by Beard, he unearthed the assumptions underlying the doctrine of liberal internationalism, explained its logic, identified its purposes, and divined its implications. He showed that the essential aim of liberal internationalism was to open the world to American enterprise." An open world abroad—guaranteed where necessary by the threat or actual use of American power—has been perceived by generations of American statesmen as essential to domestic prosperity and national security.

Bacevich's application of the Beard/Williams thesis to events since 1989 is less polemical and more open to nuance than the original, but it does not disagree on the essentials. Today's globalization is yesterday's open-door imperialism. In a series of concise (and well-written) chapters, the author emphasizes the foreign policy continuity in the Bush-Clinton-Bush years. There is not room here for detailed consideration, but, in brief, where others have seen large amounts of ad hoc improvisation—in the Clinton years especially—and have emphasized ideological differences between the administrations, Bacevich sees instead consistent grand strategy and overwhelming consensus. The "strategy of openness" is everywhere operative, without regard to which party is in power. (Searching for differences between Republican and Democratic foreign policy experts is akin, he suggests, to "contrasting the finer points

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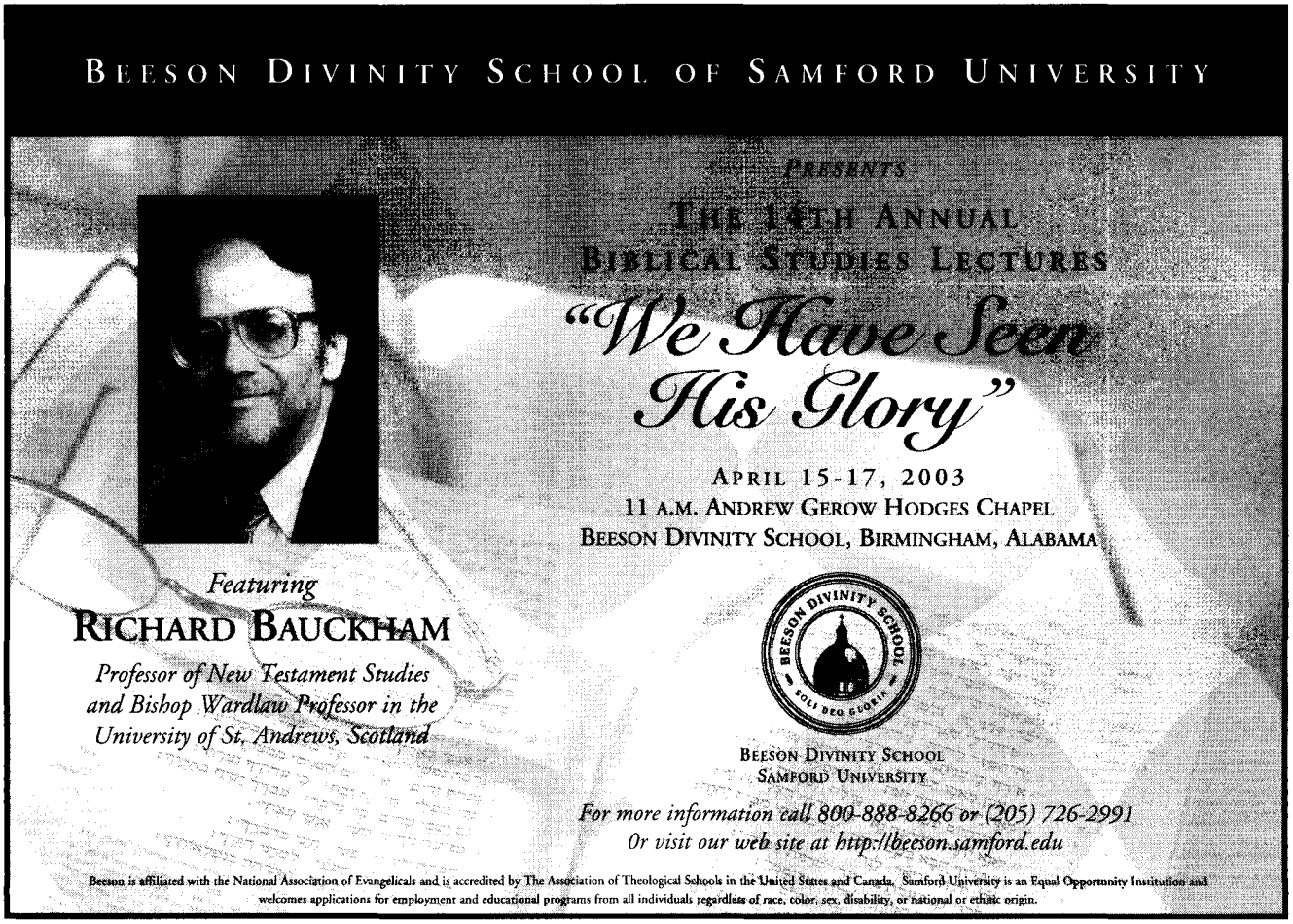
of the sitcoms on NBC with those broadcast on CBS.")

There are ways in which Bacevich's understanding of recent American policy is not only true but uncontroversial. Of course American leaders put great emphasis on continued economic growth, and of course they look to foreign trade and investment to further that growth. They would be derelict in their duty if they did not. It also comes as no great revelation that those same leaders overwhelmingly agree that the constituting elements of democratic capitalism—political freedom, democracy, free markets, and the free flow of ideas—are good not just for Americans but for the world. And few indeed are the Americans—leaders or ordinary citizens—who doubt that the world's only superpower must take a strong leadership role not only in global diplomacy but, where necessary, in the deployment of military power. Madeleine Albright's oft-repeated designation of the U.S. as the "indispensable nation" is not so much a boast as a statement of the obvious.

There is of course room for disagreement as to how well or badly America has handled its responsibilities as a kind of neo-empire. But Bacevich's uneasiness seems to go beyond criticism of particular policies. His is, if I understand it correctly, an essentially moral critique, and it leads him, in my view, into curious distortions and exaggerations.

Bacevich sees an America whose civic morality or sense of common purpose is pretty much in tatters. The counterculture of the sixties has become the common culture today, and Americans are united only by an insistence on "ever fewer restraints on the sovereign self" and an insatiable desire "for ever more material comforts and pleasures." Politicians know this, and behind their "ritualistic allusions" to liberty, peace, and democracy they operate on the assumption that voters demand of them no more than an ever expanding economic abundance to satisfy their narrow and self-absorbed pursuit of personal freedom.

This unlovely portrait is not wholly wrong, but it is, in its despairing one-sidedness, wholly inadequate as a basis for analysis. Bacevich's perspective is consistently either/or. Individuals and nations alike can be written off as hypocritical or at least as self-deluded if their behavior does not always match their declared ideals. It appears to offend Bacevich that American leaders regularly proclaim their desire to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do good in the world even while their actions are carefully calibrated to do well for their nation. In an analogous fashion, he moves from the commonsense observation that economic self-interest plays a significant role in foreign policy to the sweeping and unjustified conclusion that it is pretty much all of foreign policy. Stripped of the ominous rhetorical overtones with which the author surrounds it, the "strategy of openness" thesis does cast useful light on American motives and purposes. But it is not the all-encompassing explanatory device that he imagines it to be (and even he concedes in a footnote that it does not work for Middle East policy).

William Appleman Williams, on whom Bacevich so heavily relies, was a radical leftist who dreamed of an America that would transcend self-interest and transform itself into a utopian "Christian commonwealth." That dream inevitably failed, and because it did Williams could write of the American experience only with bitter disappointment. Andrew Bacevich is neither a leftist nor a utopian, but I fear he has absorbed from his mentor too much of the disenchantment of the disillusioned lover.

BRIEFLY NOTED

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA: POLITICAL SAFEGUARDS. By LOUIS FISHER. *University Press of Kansas. 266 pp. $16.95 paper.*

Louis Fisher surveys the full sweep of U.S. history—from colonial debates about religious liberty to modern judicial, legislative, and executive positions on the status of conscientious objection, compulsory flag salutes, school prayer, Indian religious practices, and the religious use of peyote. He concludes that the legislative branch has historically been the more consistent defender of religious liberty. The provocative thesis will be deemed heresy by partisans of "the judicial usurpation of politics," who inevitably assume that the rights of minorities receive their greatest protection from the courts. For his effective debunking of this view, Fisher's book is most welcome. His argument falls short, however, when it comes to discussing the proper social or institutional role for religion in the public square, about which he seems to harbor serious misgivings. This may be why he all but ignores evidence, such as recent legislative efforts to guarantee parental religious liberty through parochial school aid or school choice proposals, that strengthens his thesis. According to Fisher, religious groups seeking to shape a cultural Weltanschauung should be treated as Madisonian "factions" that win some and lose some according to their ability to cast religiously grounded convictions in sanitized secular language. But surely churches serve a more fundamental—even founding—function in liberal democracies than the sundry special interest groups that flourish within them. Still, despite this weakness, by challenging judicial idolatry in constitutional law, Fisher's book opens an important avenue for dialogue.

— John M. Grondelski

DON'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO!: A CATHOLIC UNDERSTANDING OF MODERN MORAL ISSUES. By FATHER DAVE HENEY. *Paulist Press. 165 pp. $11.95.*

Dave Heney, a parish priest in Southern California, begins this primer on moral decision making, appropriately enough, with a discussion of the Book of Genesis, identifying five characteristics of life before the Fall that serve as guideposts for moral living today. Adam and Eve, he writes, were *equal* under God and *good* because of God's love for them, possessed *free will*, and were created in order to *serve* each other and *worship* God. Heney then shows how these "Garden Virtues" apply to a variety of today's thorny moral issues, including marriage, child-rearing, sex, abortion, genetic engineering, business ethics, capital punishment, drug abuse, and war. The book is suffused with a kindly, commonsense tone that may make it particularly effective in reaching those (and in our culture they are legion) who might otherwise be resistant to anything resembling traditional morality. Discussion questions are provided at the end of each chapter that may be helpful for religion classes and church groups. The message throughout is that while moral living can be difficult, it is absolutely reasonable and utterly necessary if we are to fulfill our true nature and purpose. It is no coincidence, writes Heney, that "when we feel that awesome presence of God, we just naturally want to do something about it." The book is not intended to be the last word on Catholic morality, but, read in tandem with the Bible and the Catechism, it will likely help readers to take their first steps toward living the fullness of their faith.

— Cristopher Rapp

THE GENESIS OF PERFECTION: ADAM AND EVE IN JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN IMAGINATION. By GARY A. ANDERSON. *Westminster/John Knox. 256 pp. $26.*

An utterly fascinating ramble through the constituting stories of Jewish and Christian tradition, combining solid scholarship and intellectual liveliness with a winsome style that makes the book a delight for both the specialist and the general reader. Preachers, in particular, should not miss it. Anderson teaches Old Testament at Harvard Divinity School and brings to his subject an intelligent sympathy for the many ways in which Jews and Christians have construed the story of the Fall and the consequent fate of Adam and Eve. His insightful treatment of different understandings of freedom illuminates why Adam bears the greater guilt for the primordial cata-

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strophe, and Christians of all communions will be instructed by his fresh presentation of the saving connections between Eve and Mary, who is the New Eve as Jesus is the New Adam. The book is an all too rare instance of employing historical scholarship and critical methodology in a way that enhances, rather than deflates, the rich symbolic connections cultivated and sustained by living tradition. Anderson's reading of Dante and, even more, of Milton casts their thought in a different light that should change and enrich future interpretations. *The Genesis of Perfection* is a striking achievement, a model of biblical scholarship that combines intellectual adventure with a loving fidelity to tradition, and effectively conveys to the reader a full measure of the pleasure that the author obviously had in writing it. Warmly recommended.

Evil and the Augustinian Tradition. By Charles T. Matthewes. *Cambridge University Press. 271 pp. $60.*

Matthewes teaches religious studies at the University of Virginia and here brings the vast literature on the "problem" of evil, and especially the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr and Hannah Arendt, into conversation with St. Augustine. The argument is gracefully, and at points poetically, presented, and, in a sometimes indirect but effective manner, is solidly grounded in the cross and resurrection. Especially noteworthy is the author's appreciation of the many dynamics of "tradition" in Christian knowing, believing, and teaching.

The Dignity of Difference. By Jonathan Sacks. *Continuum. 224 pp. $19.95.*

An important argument cum plea from the Chief Rabbi of Britain. The "clash of civilizations" is not inevitable in a world where the politics of ideology has been displaced by the politics of identity. That displacement means that the communal roots of identity, which are religious, will become ever more assertive, but not necessarily, Sacks says, more conflictual. Far from contending that all religions are essentially the same, Sacks affirms the particularity of difference, insisting that the "dignity of difference" must be respected by those who recognize in the "other" the traces of the Other. A timely and urgent statement by a major religious thinker.

Habits of the High-Tech Heart. By Quentin J. Schultze. *Baker. 261 pp. $24.99.*

A moral and spiritual guide to, as the author puts it, "living virtuously in the information age." Technological revolutions of the present, like those of the past, are commonly acclaimed or denounced as having changed everything. Schultze has a wise appreciation of the permanent things that must engage the new things, critically discerning both promise and threat. Every age is rightly described as an age of transition, and the author offers a clear view that resists both the hype and the denial of change.

Jews and the American Public Square. Edited by Alan Mittleman et al. *Rowman & Littlefield. 374 pp. $29.95 paper.*

Jewish Polity and American Civil Society. Edited by Alan Mittleman et al. *Rowman & Littlefield. 420 pp. $29.95 paper.*

Products of the huge Pew-funded project on religion in the public square, both books of essays will be of interest to students of American Judaism. The first attends to philosophical and theological questions relative to the American polity, including shifting views of church-state relations, while the second is directed more to intra-Jewish questions relative to organizational concerns.

The Strange New Word of the Gospel. Edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson. *Eerdmans. 176 pp. $23 paper.*

The subtitle is "Re-Evangelizing in the Postmodern World," and the premise is that many, if not most, who today identify themselves as Christians are, in fact, post-Christians who need to be reintroduced to and reintegrated into the community of faith. Informed and provocative essays by Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox writers.

A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality. By Joseph Nicolosi and Linda Ames Nicolosi. *Intervarsity. 254 pp. $15 paper.*

The book assumes that parents—why is "parent" in the title in the singular?—would want to prevent homosexuality in their children, and of course almost all, whether or not they would put it that bluntly, do. And for good reason. The authors are leaders in the National Association of Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), and their book will be of invaluable help to parents. This is a welcome resource in response to a long felt need.

Ascent to Love: A Guide to Dante's Divine Comedy. By Peter Leithart. *Canon. 192 pp. $12 paper.*

Leithart, a regular contributor to these pages, offers a fetching introduction to the classic for high school and college students, along with questions and ponderings for classroom discussion.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Sexual and Related Disorders

"Years ago," writes John Leo in *U.S. News & World Report*, "an old friend, now deceased, was ordained a priest and joined a new community in the Midwest. My friend was homosexual, and it slowly dawned on me, on a visit out there, that the other priests in the house seemed to be gay too. So was the local bishop, according to the clerical grapevine. . . . Bishop Wilton Gregory, the current head of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, recently said, 'It's an ongoing struggle to make sure the Catholic priesthood is not dominated by homosexual men.' Apprehension about gay domination of the Church is now a top-level concern? Ordinary Catholics hadn't been told." Now, if they have been paying even a modicum of attention, they know.

Before we turn to the delicate matter of homosexuality and the priesthood, there are a few other developments in the Long Lent that is now well into its second year. The National Review Board mandated by the Dallas meeting of bishops last June has set up a schedule for issuing four reports. By this June they hope to have an account of just how many priests have abused how many minors and the circumstances in which the abuse occurred. Come December, there will be a report, based on visits of auditing teams to all 194 dioceses, on how the procedures approved by Dallas and revised by Rome have been implemented in the handling of these cases. A third report, with date unspecified, will employ in-depth interviews with priests, victims, bishops, and others on the "causes" of abuse, while a fourth will be farmed out to social scientists, psychologists, and other experts who will take several years to analyze the crisis in relation to its larger social context, comparing clergy abuse rates with other professions, and so forth.

There is disagreement within the board on whether to press bishops to release the names of all priests—living, retired, dead, or afflicted with Alzheimer's—who have ever been accused of abuse, going back as far as there are confidential files that can be publicized. That was done most conspicuously by William Cardinal Keeler of Baltimore, for which he won the plaudits of the media and the outrage of others for destroying the reputations of priests who have no chance to defend themselves. Ray H. Siegfried II, a member of the board, is pushing for such disclosures. "Transparency is what the charter says," he insists, "and anything short of that this businessman is not going to accept." And if that means suspending the Eighth Commandment, well, it's all in a good cause. Board member Robert Bennett says, "We have to look at the institution, and at systemic problems. What is the role of celibacy? Of homosexuality? We are going to deal with the very tough issues. I'm certain we are not going to get into doctrinal issues, unless they are a cause." The implication would seem to be that, if the review board determines that the Church's doctrine is causing sexual abuse, the Church will just have to change her doctrine.

On the anniversary of the breaking of the Boston scandal in January of last year, the *New York Times* ran its own front-page report in a long story with multiple graphs reflecting what is repeatedly referred to as "the *Times* research." For those who have been following the story carefully, there is little new in it. Examining priests who have been ordained from 1950 to the present, it is said that 1,205 have been accused of some kind of sexual abuse, with half of them molesting more than one minor and 16 percent accused of having five or more victims. There are, says the *Times*, 4,268

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"known" victims. Eighty percent of the alleged abuse is against boys, mainly teenagers. The highest rate of accusations involves those ordained in the 1970s, of whom 3.3 percent have been accused. Since January 2002, 432 accused priests have resigned, retired, or been removed from ministry. Of all priests ordained since 1950, 1.8 percent have been accused. The percentage is higher in places such as Boston where dioceses have been forced to disclose their files.

In a sidebar to the story, it is said that "the study, although the most complete of its kind, faces some methodological limitations that make it difficult for either supporters or opponents of the Church to draw sweeping conclusions. Although some facts were verified from the Church or other official sources, some information was based on published reports that could not be independently verified by the *Times*." The report describes abuse as "pervasive," and, whether because of sloppy reporting or editing, confuses the question by including "incidents dating from the 1930s and 1940s." The interesting implication is that "supporters" of the Church want to minimize and "opponents" to exaggerate the incidence of abuse. The tone and substance of the three-page story leave little doubt that the *Times* is in the second camp. But, in reality, things are much more complicated. Many traditionalists are inclined to exaggerate in order to demonstrate how deep is the rot, while many progressives exaggerate in order to advance their goals, particularly married clergy and the ordination of women. The *Times* frequently equates accusations with known guilt, but I would not be surprised if the figure of 1.8 percent accused turns out to be somewhat low. Lawyers are busily soliciting suits and some victims, also from the 1980s and 1990s, may be taking their time about going public. There are, quite possibly, more than a few such time bombs that will be going off in the years ahead.

It is said by students of journalism that the priest scandal received more media attention last year than any story except the war on terrorism. It was persistently on the front page of the *Times*, sometimes for days running. Yet in the two multi-page roundups at year's end, summarizing the most important news of the year past, the scandal received a passing mention. Does this mean the *Times* thinks the scandal is not that important after all? Or perhaps it does not qualify as news, but if it is not news, what is it? Maybe a favored cause of the media that better fits the category of advocacy. In that case, featuring it in the end-of-the-year roundups might look like the media celebrating itself. That has been known to happen. Or maybe the editors responsible just overlooked the story, although one supposes they read their own paper. In any event, it struck this reader as curious.

Lawyers in the Ring

Editors may eventually weary of the story, but not, I expect, anytime soon. Meanwhile, those who love the Church must be braced for more grim news with no end in sight. Those who hate the Church will not let the story go. Writes one columnist, "The Catholic Church in the United States is finished, but it will take years to bury the corpse." Eugene Kennedy, a former priest and longtime professor of psychology at Loyola University in Chicago, offers some vivid observations on the mistake of the bishops in inviting the lawyers to help run the Church. Like overstaying guests, they won't leave. "The bishops, accustomed to being both owners and managers of the team, as well as umpires making all the calls at every hierarchical home game, must now play on the home field, and according to the rules, of the lawyers. This is a direct result of the bishops' Faustian pact with the law, signed in their own blood at Dallas, lowering the drawbridge and allowing lawyers to enter and seize the inner workings of the Church."

Ignore the battling metaphors; he's making an important point. "The bishops belatedly pried their hands away from their own eyes and admitted at Dallas that they had a problem. Their solution was to hand it over to the legal system, to empty their files onto prosecutors' desks, and to hide under their own desks to look good legally as they removed priests automatically on the basis of accusations alone." Victims sue, priests countersue for defamation of character, and lawyers flourish. Kennedy compares it to the World Wrestling Federation. "This fixed performance is what lawyers do. They don't make any secret of it. They have been to wrestling school together and the main object is how to use mock strangleholds to squeeze money, not justice, out of the system." The other parties in the drama "become secondary to the lawyers in the middle of the ring and their dream of dividing a championship purse without really hurting each other. They want to do this again next week in a different place."

A promising alternative to that charade is offered by Archbishop Timothy Dolan of Milwaukee, who has the unenviable task of restoring the deeply divided and demoralized diocese left by his predecessor, Rembert Weakland, who resigned in disgrace. Dolan's pastoral letter, "Reform, Reconciliation, Renewal," is the work of a bishop who knows how to bishop. It addresses the crisis in the Church's language of sin and grace, is responsive to critics and victims without pandering, and accents "restorative justice," which means employing a way of mediation that sidelines the lawyers while, at the same time, meeting all legal requirements. "The mediation I envision," says Dolan,

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"is a process independent of litigation where victims and their advocates meet with representatives of the archdiocese, without lawyers, to come to a response of pastoral, spiritual, emotional, and restorative care. . . . I believe with all my heart and soul that Jesus is purifying and renewing his Church through all this sorrow and pain." There is undoubtedly much more pain to come, but Dolan's initiative has been well received by almost everyone in Milwaukee and suggests itself as a model for other dioceses. (A copy of the pastoral letter may be obtained by writing the Archbishop at the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, P.O. Box 070912, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207-0912.)

In pathetic contrast is Manchester, New Hampshire, where Bishop John McCormack, formerly an auxiliary of Boston, has managed to get himself into a position so untenable that even his friends fear he cannot last much longer. He appears to be in way over his head. McCormack has stumbled again and again, but he set off national alarms when, under pressure from the state's attorney general, he entered into an agreement that makes the diocese the defendant and places significant parts of the Church's ministry under state supervision in a way that raises monumental questions of church-state relations.

McCormack and his colleagues are let off the hook by an agreement that states, "The Diocese of Manchester acknowledges that certain decisions made by it about the assignment to ministry of priests who had abused minors in the past resulted in other minors being victimized." The decisions were made by "it." The agreement speaks of faults in the "culture" of the diocese, in the "system," and in the "structure." No blame is attached to the people in charge, if anyone was in charge. The logic is: the structure made us do what we didn't do. Bishop Gregory of the USCCB immediately recognized the evasiveness of this ploy and the dangerous precedent it could set. "The errors of specific persons at specific times and places which may have endangered children cannot be attributed to the Church as a whole," he declared. "As Church leaders we are willing to own up to our mistakes." And if McCormack isn't, Manchester might soon have a new leader.

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The Nuns' Story

Since the last installment, there was also the Nuns' Story. You may have seen it during its brief run into deserved oblivion. It was reprinted in papers around the country. I do not say that the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* hit a new low, since the competition for that distinction is intense among the media bottom feeders, but the paper splashed on its front page the awful disclosure that 40 percent of nuns have been sexually abused at some point in their lives, with one out of eight exploited during her religious life. As the story was pitched, the unsuspecting reader would conclude that 40 percent of nuns had been raped or molested, mainly by priests. The paper preened itself on the hard-nosed investigative reporting that had brought these previously concealed facts to light. In fact, the study exploited by the *Post-Dispatch* had been published several years ago in professional journals and was thought old hat by people paying attention. Fearless investigative reporting consisted in nothing more than an ability to read and a determination to distort. Sexual abuse, as defined in the story, was so loosely defined that it is surprising that 100 percent of nuns did not report being abused. After all, the refusal to ordain women as priests is clearly an instance of "gender discrimination." As it happens, women ministers in oldline Protestant churches and women rabbis report being abused, exploited, and discriminated against at a rate almost twice as high as reported by nuns. But that, of course, is beside the point. It is the Catholic Church that is in the crosshairs. Philip Jenkins commented in *Chronicle of Higher Education*: "The attention focused on this nonstory is a telling illustration of how far the media are prepared to go in attacking the Catholic Church, and how many people are prepared to accept these charges without question or criticism. The only remaining question is this: Why don't they just quit stalling and reprint *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*?"

On the legal front, the California assembly and senate have unanimously voted to suspend the statute of limitations on clergy sex abuse claims for one year. When that was happening last summer, the California bishops did not oppose the measure, fearing that it would seem self-serving and would only highlight the fact that the law is aimed, without saying so, specifically at the Catholic Church. This December, however, the bishops did issue a letter saying that the law would result in a new wave of molestation suits, and would revive long-settled cases, some involving alleged perpetrators and witnesses who have been dead for many years, which would make it "difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the truth." The bishops may challenge the law in court.

The idea of statutes of limitation is to serve the goal of what today is commonly called "closure"; that parties in a dispute have a right at some point to finality, to be free from the endless threat of lawsuit. Also, such statutes protect the integrity of the court and justice systems, so they do not have to be dealing with cases in which the evidence has gone stale and witnesses are appealing to such discredited notions as "recovered memory syndrome." Nonetheless, a

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number of states are planning to follow California's lead, and some, such as New Jersey, are entertaining proposals to eliminate altogether statutes of limitations in cases of child molestation. In Minnesota, on the other hand, a coalition of churches, child care agencies, and defense lawyers successfully argued that such changes are bad for the justice system, bad for children, and bad for the institutions that have the job of protecting children.

The Lavender Network

Now we turn to the top-level concern that John Leo says he and other ordinary Catholics had not been told about. Three years ago, Father Donald Cozzens, a man of impeccable liberal credentials and a former seminary rector, published *The Changing Face of the Priesthood*, which brought to more general attention the high incidence of homosexuals in the priesthood. Nobody knows how high, but certainly several times higher than in the general population. There are seminaries, Cozzens wrote, in which heterosexual men are made to feel distinctly uncomfortable by a dominantly gay culture. Cozzens has a new book, *Sacred Silence: Denial and Crisis in the Church* (Liturgical Press). In it he responds to criticisms of the earlier book and defends his liberal credentials on a number of scores, notably in his support for married priests; but he does not back away from his concern about homosexuals and the networks they almost inevitably create, frequently involving promiscuous sex in the gay subcultures of American cities, and, in some cases, even the blackmailing of priests and bishops who may try to restrain or expose their activities. Cozzens writes:

> When priests in such networks attain leadership posts, the health and morale of the presbyterate itself are at stake. I suspect a good number of these networks are celibate in the sense that there is little or no sexual contact among its members. Priests and seminarians in these loosely structured groups find the company of other like-minded men spiritually and aesthetically enriching. They share, nonetheless, a common secret—the existence of their gay world and the joy they find in it. The secret inevitably reinforces the network and its excluding power. The effect even of celibate networks on seminaries and presbyterates is unhealthy and divisive. They reinforce a culture of secrecy.

After Cozzens' first book, there appeared Michael Rose's *Goodbye, Good Men*, written in the mode of an exposé of the lavender hegemony in many seminaries that drove away the good, meaning heterosexual, men of his title. There is not a shortage of priestly vocations, Rose argues (following Archbishop Elden Curtiss of Omaha), but an abundance of obstacles that effectively exclude good men who dissent from widespread doctrinal dissent and are not "comfortable with" sexual deviance. Rose has been criticized for citing a couple of seminary situations of a decade or more ago that have since been largely remedied, but almost nobody denies that the problems he addresses are very real, and not very rare. In a survey of 1,200 priests conducted by Dean R. Hoge of Catholic University, more than half said there was a homosexual subculture in their diocese or seminary. But only three percent of priests over the age of sixty-six had that impression. Hoge said that the age gap shows that the subcultures had increased over time, or that they were underground, or that older men have hazier memories of their seminary days. The last two explanations are probably true, and the first, on the basis of the evidence offered by Cozzens, Rose, and many others, is almost certainly true.

Jason Berry, a journalist who brought clergy sex abuse to public attention in the 1980s, agrees with Cozzens and Bishop Gregory that the priesthood is in danger of becoming a "gay profession." In interviewing gay priests, Berry writes, "I asked why, if they could not practice celibacy, they didn't leave the priesthood. Most saw themselves as leading the Church toward the reform of outdated moral teachings—including celibacy." He writes, "Most liberal Catholics find it difficult to call attention to this situation for fear that criticism of any dimension of gay culture is homophobia. But the issue is hypocrisy, not homophobia." The answer, according to Berry and many others, is to end the celibacy rule, allowing heterosexuals to marry and gays to do whatever gays do.

The Dots Connected

The reality of gays in the priesthood and its connection to the scandals has been aptly described as the elephant in the sacristy that many are determined to ignore. The *Times* says 80 percent, but other tabulations of the instances of abuse that have come to light indicate that as many as 90 percent involve boys, usually postpubescent boys. In other words, sexually mature teenagers who view themselves, and are viewed by others, as young men. Men having sex with men is usually called homosexual or gay sex. That the beautiful young man is the erotic ideal of the gay subculture is easily verified by flipping through any of a dozen gay-oriented magazines at your local

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bookstore. Yet, in the context of the present scandals, many are embarrassingly stubborn in denying the obvious. It is not a matter of connecting the dots. They are already and very explicitly connected by the subculture, by gay priests who are determined to "reform outdated moral teachings," and by the court records in case after case. Even if, as some claim, only a little more than half the cases involve priests having sex with young men, it makes little sense to suggest that the Church should ignore more than half the problem.

After the Dallas meeting of bishops, Dignity, an organization of gay activists, issued a press release: "We are very pleased that in this document [adopted at the meeting], the U.S. bishops are finally agreeing with what experts have been saying all along—that there is absolutely no link between the sexual abuse of children and homosexuality." Of course the bishops did not agree to any such thing, but they did carefully avoid mentioning the link. That avoidance or, as some prefer, evasion is coming to an end. Toward the end of last year, Cardinal Jorge Medina Estevez, on behalf of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, declared:

> The ordination to the diaconate or to the priesthood of homosexual persons or those with a homosexual tendency is absolutely inadvisable and imprudent and, from a pastoral point of view, very risky. . . . A person who is homosexual or has homosexual tendencies is not, therefore, suitable to receive the sacrament of sacred orders.

A draft of a forthcoming document on this question is circulating among several congregations of the Curia, and it or a companion document will also address the matter of psychological testing and the abuses of psychological testing in determining admission to seminaries. The document will be normative for the universal Church and, it is expected, will play an important part in the visitation of American seminaries ordered by the Pope last April. Predictably, some are construing this as a "witchhunt" against gay priests and yet another "rollback" of the reforms mandated by "the spirit of Vatican II." There will likely be nothing new in the document, however. What is new is the sense of urgency about applying what has always been the Church's teaching and formal discipline.

In 1974, the Congregation for Education said: "The choice of priestly celibacy does not interfere with the normal development of a person's emotional life, but on the contrary it presupposes it. . . . This maturity is all the more applicable when one is dealing with the formation of students in a seminary. This is because God calls real men and, if there are no real men, there can be no call." To speak today in that old-fashioned way about "real men" triggers the charge of homophobia, but only because everybody knows what the phrase means. In a 1967 encyclical, Pope Paul VI wrote, "The life of the celibate priest, which engages the whole man so totally and so delicately, excludes in fact those of insufficient psycho-physical and moral balance. Nor should anyone pretend that grace supplies for the defects of nature in such a man." Last month I mentioned the thoughtful response to the crisis by Bishop John D'Arcy of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana. Citing the foregoing authoritative statements, D'Arcy comments: "If we send into the ministry men with pathologies, serious personality problems, or an incapacity for true pastoral love, they will draw the same kind of men. Thus the path to more vocations to the priesthood, which are so desperately needed, lies not in lowering the bar but in raising it to where the Church in its documents always said it should be."

Jesuits Take the Lead

Although no hard figures are available, it is generally thought that the incidence of homosexual and gay priests is considerably higher in the religious orders than among the diocesan clergy. The discussion is confused by the frequent failure to distinguish between "homosexual" and "gay." Homosexuality is present when someone experiences, with varying degrees of intensity, same-sex attractions. A person whose erotic desires are dominantly or exclusively directed toward persons of the same sex may know himself to have a major problem with homosexuality. For understandable reasons, gay activists want to subsume all homosexuality under the title of "gay." But the distinction still holds in everyday language. If someone announces himself as gay, he is not saying that he has a problem with same-sex desires. He is in almost all cases defining and affirming his identity as a person by reference to his sexual desires. "This is not just something about me, it is who I am, and what I do sexually is honest to who I am." Understandably again, such persons typically dissent, publicly or privately, from the Church's teaching on sexual morality, and frequently do not hesitate to assert that what the Church teaches is simply false.

In reaction to the present circumstance, and in defense of gays in the priesthood, the Society of Jesus has taken the public lead. This is not because the Jesuits necessarily have a higher ratio of gay priests—although there has been much published about the "graying and gaying" of the order—but because they

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have an official publication of some public influence, *America*, and they still enjoy the afterglow of a reputation for intellectual acuity. Other orders have followed more or less identical practices. Here, for instance, is a celebratory story about a leading gay activist in Illinois who, to his surprise, was readily accepted for the priesthood this past year by the Dominicans of the Chicago Province. As he looks to his future, we are told, "He would like to serve a college campus ministry, recruiting other men into the order." But of course. "I have been offended in the last year," he says, "when people have used the gay issue as a scapegoat for the scandals in the Church. Being a pedophile has nothing to do with being gay." There is some truth in that, remembering that a pedophile is inclined toward sex with prepubescent children.

Whatever may be the situation with the Dominicans, Franciscans, Benedictines, and others, including diocesan clergy, the Jesuits have become the chief public defenders of the status quo established over the past three decades or so. Last fall, *America* set up an exchange between Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, auxiliary of Detroit, and Fr. Andrew Baker of Rome's Congregation for Bishops. Gumbleton has long been an advocate of gay advocates, while insisting that he is not a gay advocate, and he wrote an anecdotal essay about the gay men he knows who are good priests. Baker offered a closely reasoned point-by-point argument as to why homosexuals, and certainly gays, should not be admitted to the priesthood. The editors apparently recognized that Baker got the better of the exchange, and subsequent issues have not even pretended to offer "balanced" viewpoints. Multiple editorials and articles have defended the ordination of gays, and a special issue was devoted to the subject in December.

Disordered Arguments

In that issue, Fr. Edward Vacek, professor of moral theology at Weston School of Theology in Massachusetts, was featured as the heavy hitter. Fr. Vacek, who does not disguise his rejection of magisterial teaching, offers as his clinching argument the syllogism-like formulation, "From the fact that there are gay men who are good, celibate priests, it follows that gay men can be good celibate priests." Of course everything depends on what is meant by being a good priest and what is meant by being celibate. "The linchpin in the Vatican view is that homosexuality is an 'objective disorder,'" he writes. "For the purposes of this article, let me concede but also clarify that term." In the Catholic tradition, he continues, heterosexuality is also an objective disorder because, according to everyone from St. Paul to the Second Vatican Council, it can be accompanied by lustful thoughts, adultery, fornication, and other evils. That is why, he says, the Church teaches that "marriage is a 'remedy' for this disorder."

But of course this is patent sophistry. Everything created good, including man's love for woman, is tainted by original sin and susceptible to actual sin. But there is nothing "objectively disordered" about heterosexuality. Marriage has indeed been viewed as, among other things, a remedy for lust, adultery, fornication, and other evils, but never as a remedy for heterosexuality. Vacek repeatedly depicts two thousand years of consistent Christian teaching on homosexuality as "the Vatican view," as though Rome is imposing a new position and he is defending the tradition. It is really quite extraordinary, and thoroughly disingenuous. The unsuspecting reader might assume that Fr. Vacek's essay reflects a difficult wrestling with his uncertainties. But it appears he has long had a very definite view on these matters. There is, for instance, his 1980 essay in *Commonweal*, "A Christian Homosexuality?" In the light of his argument there, the question mark was already then a coy gesture.

Well before the "gay revolution" had really gotten up steam, and before "gay" was the prescribed term, Fr. Vacek wrote, "Put simply, some are quite happy with their condition, some confused, and some quite unhappy. To those who are at peace with their homosexuality it seems an affront to demand that they change themselves." He then took what is now called the "conservative" gay position associated with Andrew Sullivan and some others. "It should be clear in what follows that no one recommends the kind of activity that would be condemned if it were performed in a heterosexual context. No argument for homosexual relations should be construed as an argument for promiscuity, prostitution, mate swapping, infidelity, and the like. Homosexuals must exhibit the same personalist virtues as heterosexuals."

With apparent reference to the thoroughly discredited work of the late John Boswell, Vacek wrote, "Many scholars think that the sin of Sodom was not primarily homosexuality, but inhospitality, gang rape, and even attempted sexual congress with angels." Employing what he describes as an "ethics of proportionality" (which has since been explicitly condemned by John Paul II), he wrote, "Stated briefly, my judgment is this. Homosexual actions are biologically deficient, but they may be psychologically healthy, the best available exercise of one's interpersonal freedom, and may even be a form of authentic Christian spirituality." He goes further. "Persons who are homosexuals are able to function

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and grow at least as well as heterosexuals. . . . Somewhat surprisingly, they 'make love' more humanely, largely because they are better able empathetically to feel what their partner is feeling." Fr. Vacek allowed that some homosexuals may be called to "genital non-activity." "The desire never to act contrary to certain explicit statements of our Scriptures and tradition may itself constitute such a vocation for some." Fidelity may be an option. For some.

In sum, twenty-three years later *America* recruits as its champion for the defense of a disordered status quo a pioneer of the status quo's disorder. "From the fact that there are gay men who are good, celibate priests, it follows that gay men can be good celibate priests." It sounds logical; one might even say Jesuitical. But of course it entirely begs the pertinent questions. Does being a good priest include faithfulness to the Church's authoritative teaching? Does being celibate mean a commitment to perfect and perpetual continence? To judge by the case that *America* tries to make for the status quo, the answers are clearly in the negative. But the alarm of the editors, and of those, Jesuit and non-Jesuit, for whom they speak is not surprising. There will not be, I am confident, a witchhunt to drive those with homosexual leanings out of the priesthood. There will be, I hope and expect, a strengthened resolve to confront priests, both heterosexual and homosexual, with the need to decide between fidelity and demitting their ministries. There will also be, and it is already underway, a clear policy and practice of not admitting homosexuals to seminaries and other programs of priestly formation.

Some seminaries and religious orders will no doubt resist as best they can the renewed order of the old tradition. They are the ones that are dying. About the "ongoing struggle to make sure the Catholic priesthood is not dominated by homosexual men" and about much else with which the Church is struggling, the conventional alignments will likely continue for the foreseeable future. What are called the left and the right are in agreement that authoritative magisterial teaching and governance ended with Vatican II. The right, often preferring the name traditionalist, views the Council as an abandonment of the tradition in favor of modernistic novelties. The left, often calling itself the party of progress, celebrates the Council and construes it as having terminated the authority of Rome and of the hierarchy more generally. Garry Wills puts it nicely: John Paul II, Ratzinger, and those in their company are attempting "a coup against the Council." Both left and right are the parties of Catholic discontinuity. In the center is the party of Catholic continuity. It is composed of those who embrace the high adventure of Catholic fidelity as set forth by the Council and its authoritative interpretation by the continuing Magisterium of the Church. Despite all, the center holds.

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DOSTOEVSKY AND THE FIERY WORD

When I was young and under the compulsion to affect a deeper experience of life than I had, I was fond of quoting Whittier's sage-sounding observation that the saddest words of tongue or pen are simply these, "It might have been." They can be words of profound regret and even bitterness about the roads not taken, but they can also be spoken without sadness in grateful recognition of one's creatureliness. Being a creature of time and limited possibilities, no matter how much I've done, what I've done is so pitiably small, but I choose to believe it was mine to do. Decisions were made; and I've never gotten over my first discovery that the word decision is derived from *decidere*, which means to cut off. In deciding for this and then for that, from which followed the other thing, I cut off what might have been. But it is only in moments of ungrateful rebellion against my creatureliness that I resent the fact that what might have been was not. Most of the time I think about what might have been not in resentment but in wonder.

I know for sure that I will never do the monumental thing done by Joseph Frank. I have published, quite literally, millions of words on subjects so various that many, if not most, of them escape recall. I am regularly asked by graduate students in search of something or someone to write about what I meant by one thing or another that I wrote ten or twenty or even thirty years ago. I wrote that, did I? What I wrote is usually not an embarrassment, although there is a touch of awkwardness in not remembering.

The same might have been the case with Joseph Frank. After all, he was a professor of comparative literature and understood himself to be a literary critic. He could very well have ended up giving papers at the Modern Language Association on transgressive gendering or other topics of felt academic urgency. But then—to our good fortune and, I trust, to his gratification—he got interested in Dostoevsky. He started out to write a modest book on the novels, but then, as he rather understates the matter, "my initial intention would grow in size and scope." Decades later, we have the fifth, final, and very big volume of a biography that will be a standard reference for as

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long as there are people interested in Dostoevsky, which I like to think will be until Our Lord returns in glory. It is titled *Dostoevsky: The Mantle of the Prophet, 1871-1881* (Princeton University Press, 794 pp., $35). Frank is now professor emeritus and I cannot help but wonder, not without a smidgen of what I trust is unsinful envy, what must be the satisfaction of a writer's life commandeered by one grand project.

Frank invested his life in exploring everything pertinent to understanding the life and work of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky: the language, the social and political changes, the literary rivalries, the loves, the illnesses, the frustrations. It seems there is almost nothing left unexplored. The fifth volume picks up at the point of Dostoevsky's return to Russia from four thoroughly disquieting years in the West and includes the writing of *A Raw Youth*, *The Diary of a Writer*, and, by far the most important, *The Brothers Karamazov*. The last is, I dare say, the greatest novel ever written, and the only novel I have read and reread year after year, always with increased pleasure and admiration. Frank writes:

> No previous work gives the reader such an impression of controlled and measured grandeur, a grandeur that spontaneously evokes comparison with the greatest creations of Western literature. *The Divine Comedy*, *Paradise Lost*, *King Lear*, *Faust*—these are the titles that naturally come to mind as one tries to measure the stature of *The Brothers Karamazov*. For these too grapple with the never-ending and never-to-be-ended argument aroused by the "accursed questions" of mankind's destiny.

A Definite Argument

I would not quibble with a word of that. And yet, in the very same passage Joseph Frank makes a claim that is repeated in various forms throughout his biography. With that claim I have not only a quibble but a very definite argument. In fact, I have the temerity to suggest that Frank is simply wrong when he writes that *Karamazov* is about "the great theme that had preoccupied [Dostoevsky] since *Notes from Underground*: the conflict between reason and Christian faith." I am keenly aware that Joseph Frank probably knows as much about Dostoevsky as any person alive. For all his undoubted knowledge, however, I am persuaded that he misunderstands texts that are crucial to his claim that Dostoevsky's lifelong obsession was with the presumed conflict between reason and what Frank persistently calls "irrational faith." Since that claim is key to, in some ways *the* key to, his construal of Dostoevsky's life and work, this is no little disagreement. But I will come back to that. First it is necessary and fitting to note, indeed to relish, other aspects of Frank's achievement.

Underscoring the subtitle "The Mantle of the Prophet," the fifth volume employs as its epigraph Pushkin's "The Prophet." Pushkin had died in 1837, and there is no doubt that Dostoevsky believed that he, Elisha-like, had inherited his mantle. On several notable occasions, he gave public recitations of the poem that were marked with such fervor of devotion that the audience sensed that one even greater than Pushkin was here. The poem speaks of a "six-winged seraph" who cuts open the author's breast and presses into the wound "a glowing livid coal."

> *There in the desert I lay dead,*
> *And God called out to me and said:*
> *"Rise, prophet, rise, and hear, and see,*
> *And let my works be seen and heard*
> *By all who turn aside from me,*
> *And burn them with my fiery word."*

Dostoevsky evinced the conviction of having been divinely commissioned in a manner that was diffident, almost shy, and utterly devoid of braggadocio. He was anxious about falling short of the task bestowed. An admirer describes her meeting with Dostoevsky: "Most sharply of all remains in my memory the following trait, quite outstanding in Dostoevsky, his fear of ceasing to understand the young generation, of breaking with it. . . . There was not at all any fear of ceasing to be a beloved writer or of decreasing the number of his followers and readers: no, he obviously regarded a *disagreement* with the young generation as a human *downfall*, as a moral death. He boldly and honorably defends his intimate convictions; and at the same time somehow fears not fulfilling the mission entrusted to him, and inadvertently losing his way."

Frank supplies a number of instances in which Dostoevsky seems almost to be pandering to the youth, so worried is he about not losing touch with the shifting currents of thought and yearnings for change. His is not, however, the embarrassing sixties-ish posturing of so many of the hoary-headed among today's intellectuals. Dostoevsky's wisdom embraced the creatureliness of his aging and mortality. His anxiety was not for himself but for the mission, for the prophecy that will be carried to fulfillment by the successor generation and their children. Frank is especially strong in depicting the churnings of avant-garde opinion, of political and social movements, from sundry socialisms of atheistic and engineering varieties to populist efforts by intellectuals to reconnect with the "simple faith" of the Russian

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peasantry. For long stretches, *Dostoevsky* is as much social and political history as it is an examination of the man's thought and writing. To which Frank would no doubt say, with justice, that the two are inseparable.

Dostoevsky understood himself to be the prophet of a new world in which historical possibility intersected with resurrection hope. I confess that I had always found the ending of *Karamazov* something of a let-down. There Alyosha Karamazov, the youngest of the three brothers, is surrounded by the boys remembering their poor and shabbily treated friend. Alyosha addresses them:

> "Ah, children, ah, dear friends, do not be afraid of life! How good life is when you do something good and right!" . . .
>
> "Karamazov, we love you!" a voice, which seemed to be Kartashov's, exclaimed irrepressibly. . . .
>
> "Hurrah for Karamazov!" Kolya proclaimed.
>
> "And memory eternal for the dead boy!" Alyosha added again.
>
> "Karamazov," cried Kolya, "can it really be true, as religion says, that we shall all rise from the dead, and come to life, and see one another again, and everyone, and Ilyushechka?"
>
> "Certainly we shall rise, certainly we shall see and gladly, joyfully tell one another all that has been," Alyosha replied, half laughing, half in ecstasy.

And then they went off, hand in hand, to the meager funeral meal. As I say, the ending always seemed to me to be marred by an excess of sentimentality, leaving me with the hope that it might have been redeemed by the second volume of *Karamazov*, focusing on Alyosha, that Dostoevsky did not live to write. But Frank helped me to understand the fitness of the ending, charged as it is with the conviction that the love exemplified by Alyosha is a world-transforming force. At the same time, Frank's treatment of Dostoevsky as prophet of a world-transforming word lacks a certain weightiness, and I think the reason is that he does not, for whatever reason, take seriously Alyosha's, and Dostoevsky's, eschatological hope. Perhaps it is because that hope is part of the faith that Frank calls, with puzzlement often indistinguishable from dismissiveness, "irrational."

"From Them I Accepted Christ"

The socialists who took a populist turn in trying to utilize Christianity without Christ viewed Dostoevsky's reverence for the faith of the Russian people as naive, romantic, and, yes, irrational. Dostoevsky responds that he is well aware of "the transgressions" of the Christ-loving people, but, referring to the years in Siberia, he also knows much more. "I lived with them for some years, shared meals with them, slept alongside them, and was myself 'numbered among the transgressors'; I worked with them at real, backbreaking labor and at a time when others were playing at liberalism and snickering about the people. So don't tell me that I don't know the people! I know them; it was from them I accepted Christ into my soul again, Christ whom I had known while still a child in my parents' home and whom I was about to lose when I, in my turn, transformed myself into a 'European liberal.'" One can hardly exaggerate the disdain that attends Dostoevsky's use of the words "European liberal."

Dostoevsky's animus toward European liberalism and Roman Catholicism—which to his mind were of a piece—is another thing that can hardly be exaggerated (see Rodney Delasanta's "Dostoevsky Also Nods," FT, January 2002). There are, Dostoevsky said, three ideas contending for mastery over the world. One is "the Catholic idea" embodied in France and at the heart of French socialism. "For French socialism is nothing other than the *compulsory* unity of humanity, an idea that derived from ancient Rome and that was subsequently preserved in Catholicism." Rome is infinitely devious and resourceful. It is by no means the antithesis of socialism. "Having lost the kings as its allies," said Dostoevsky, "it will surely rush to the demos." Indeed, socialism is simply the secularized version of Catholicism with its claim to universal domination, and the Church is eager to re-sacralize it. Dostoevsky was on to something. There were and are Catholics who think that way. Today's readers will recall the late and unlamented efforts of "liberation theology" to establish under Marxist auspices what would be, in effect, a new Christendom.

The second great force is "the Protestant idea" that, Dostoevsky said, goes back far before Luther but gained new strength with the unification of Germany in 1870. As Frank describes his thought, "Like the Slavophiles, Dostoevsky views Protestantism as fundamentally a *protest* against Latin Catholic civilization, hence containing nothing positive of its own and ultimately leading to atheism and nihilism." And the third great force is, of course, "the Slavic idea" incarnated in Orthodoxy and the Russian faithful. Despite the eighteenth-century efforts of Peter the Great to introduce westernizing corruptions, Dostoevsky believed in the fundamental religious and social integrity of Holy Russia. Russia is, for Dostoevsky, the Redeemer Nation, and his fantastical claims for

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the moral, spiritual, and even intellectual superiority of the Russian people know no bounds. Frank deals with all this in detail, and is particularly deft in his treatment of what we today can only describe as Dostoevsky's anti-Semitism. "Yiddism," he believed, was a culture within a culture, a people within a people, and therefore a culture and people undermining the integrity and destiny of Orthodox Russia.

A Poor Prophet

Critics, one notes in passing, have been exceedingly harsh in their treatment of Dostoevsky's nationalism. It is said with derision that, in view of the overthrow of the Tsar, the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, and the subsequent history of the Soviet Union, Dostoevsky was a lamentably poor prophet. To which the response is that his prophetic office did not consist in predictive powers but in bearing witness to a truth and possibility that, tragically, were shattered by the facticity of history. As Richard Pipes and other historians have underscored, there was nothing inevitable about the Bolshevik takeover. One can readily conjure other and credible scenarios in which Tsardom and Orthodoxy might have cooperated in the realization of something approximating Dostoevsky's hopes.

Even with respect to predictive powers, the magnificent Legend of the Grand Inquisitor, related by Ivan Karamazov, was eerily prescient in its understanding of the dynamics that would become twentieth-century totalitarianism. Frank observes in a footnote that "Dostoevsky's nightmare vision of the surrender of inner freedom for untroubled security was also a predecessor of the literary genre of dystopia, represented by such works as Eugene Zamiatin's *We*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and George Orwell's *1984*. The motif of deception—the Grand Inquisitor's pretense to speak in the name of the true Christ—is closer to the Communist model."

Dostoevsky is harshly criticized also for his support of the Russian effort to recapture Constantinople as the capital of Orthodoxy. That effort is commonly derided as an exercise in unbridled jingoism, but it is by no means evident today that France and, more particularly, England ("perfidious Albion") were on the side of the angels in opposing Russia's effort. The "what if" arguments of history are interminable, but a believable case can be made that today's "clash of civilizations" and the attendant war against terrorism might be less threatening, or have been avoided altogether, had Christian Russia succeeded in turning back, at least in part, the Muslim conquest. One might even push the question a bit further and speculate that, on the basis of what he foresaw then, Dostoevsky would not have been surprised by what many view as today's unfolding conquest-by-immigration as Islam relentlessly presses upon a spiritually and demographically dying Europe. Dostoevsky's eye was ever attentive to the larger patterns of history.

A key to understanding Dostoevsky is "fantastic realism," a phrase he himself used to describe his work. Frank explains it nicely:

> He is always striving to apply to the present the mode of apprehension that he sees as a psychological datum in relation to the past. He looks for the essence of the passing and contemporary by projecting it into the future and *imagining* its completion (which makes it "fantastic"), but then, with an unflinching moral-social and psychological realism, dramatizing all the consequences of this future, as if it had already occurred or was coming into being.

This fantastic realism is closely tied to Dostoevsky's appreciation of original sin, although he is not comfortable with that terminology snatched from the Augustinian vocabulary of the West. The ever so progressive spreaders of the "European" disease deny the reality of human guilt and freedom, contending that fault and destiny lie with social and economic arrangements. Dostoevsky rejects this in no uncertain terms:

> It is clear and intelligible to the point of obviousness that evil lies deeper in human beings than our socialist-physicians suppose; that no social structure will eliminate evil; that the human soul will remain as it has always been; that abnormality and sin arise from that soul itself; and, finally, that the laws of the human soul are still so little known, so obscure to science, so undefined, and so mysterious, that there are not and cannot be either physicians or *final* judges.

The Question Is Freedom

There it is, and it will not go away: the question of the soul. It brings us back to the aforementioned disagreement with Joseph Frank, a disagreement which, I regret to say, is inescapable and basic. I regret to say it because it seems almost a sin against gratitude for the enormous gift that is his *Dostoevsky*. But it must be said: the driving motif around which Dostoevsky's life and work cohere is not the conflict between "reason and irrational faith." It is, rather, the conflict between freedom and the enemies of freedom, however variously disguised. It is between the

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affirmation and the denial of the reality of the human soul.

The simple Russian people knew they had souls. Dostoevsky fiercely defended popular Christian piety, even when it appeared to be superstitious and fantastical. In response to a critic he writes, "They need sacred objects by their side, visible, as reflections of Godliness. One must believe, aspire to the invisible God, but revere Him on earth with simple customs that are related to Him. You can tell me that such belief is blind and naive, and I will reply that faith should be that way. We can't all be theologians." And, we might add, a good thing too. The people are not theologians, but, as we shall see, Dostoevsky, although an artist and not a theologian in any academic sense, is given to careful theological reflection. Joseph Frank is inclined to disparage this at almost every turn. He describes Dostoevsky's Weltanschauung as one of "apocalyptic intuitions of impending cosmic chaos, religious irrationalism, and mystical nationalism"—and they are all of a piece. At several points, Frank even compares Dostoevsky with Kierkegaard in what he calls his intuition of the "total irrationality and subjectivity" of faith.

Yet he also quotes, without attempting to explain, Dostoevsky's emphatic rejection of the claim that faith is irrational. The real irrationality, Dostoevsky insists, is represented by forms of Enlightenment, and often atheistic, rationalism that he sometimes terms "Euclidian." "Infinite wisdom," says Dostoevsky, "crushes the mind of man, but he seeks it. Existence must be unquestionably and in every instance superior to the mind of man. The doctrine that the mind of man is the final limit of the universe is as stupid as stupid can be, and even stupider, infinitely stupider, than a game of checkers between two shopkeepers." That may be described as an affirmation of the supra-rational, but it is not, as Frank claims, "irrational." It is, rather, a conclusion to which Dostoevsky is compelled by reason.

A critic writes Dostoevsky in what Frank describes as a "tone of lofty professorial self-assurance"—a tone which, I am sorry to say, Frank too often assumes—about the infantile and irrational nature of religious faith. To which Dostoevsky responds, "You could regard me from a scientific point of view, but not so arrogantly when it concerns philosophy, although philosophy is not my specialty. . . . It is not like a child that I believe in Christ and profess faith in him, but rather my *hosanna* has come through the great *crucible of doubt*, as the devil says in that same novel of mine" (*Karamazov*). As for science, Dostoevsky is all for it, but what is called science is unscientific and irrational, or just plain "stupid," when it refuses to take seriously faith and that to which faith points. "The tremendous fact of the appearance on earth of Jesus, and all that came after that, in my opinion demand scientific elaboration. But at the same time, science cannot reject the meaning that religion does have for humanity, if only as a historical fact that is staggering in its continuity and tenacity. The conviction that humanity has about *coming in contact with another world* is also very significant and cannot be resolved [by dismissing it as 'infantile']."

Again, his point is that Euclidian rationalism is not rational enough, and dogmatically atheistic science is unscientific. It is not with Kierkegaard but with Pascal that Dostoevsky should be compared. The heart has its reasons, and as with Pascal and, earlier, with Augustine—although there is no evidence that Dostoevsky was conscious of borrowing from either on this score—there is the awareness of love as a way of knowing. In *Karamazov*, the chattering Mme. Khokhlakova has picked up bits of fashionable atheism and responds to the saintly Father Zosima's statement of faith, "But how is one to prove it?" It is surely Dostoevsky who speaks through Zosima when he says that no "proof" is possible but one knows "by the experience of active love. If you attain to perfect self-forgetfulness in the love of your neighbor, then you will believe without doubts and no doubt can possibly enter your soul."

Irrational Rationalism

Frank says that the rationalist Ivan Karamazov "refuses to make the leap of faith" that would allow him to believe in Christ and his world-transforming power. But it is not a Kierkegaardian leap of faith that is at issue. In the very same passage he quotes Ivan saying that "even if at the moment of eternal harmony, something so precious will come to pass that it will suffice for all hearts, for the comforting of all resentments, for the atonement of all the crimes of humanity . . . even then, though all that may come to pass, I won't accept it." Then Frank himself comments, "Ivan now finds himself in the same position as those unbelievers mentioned earlier who would not accept miracles even if they were accomplished before their very eyes." Precisely. But Frank fails to recognize the import of what he has just said. The problem with Ivan is not that he "refuses to make the leap of faith" but that he is blinded to reality by his irrational rationalism.

Frank is similarly confusing the reader, I believe, when he speaks of Dostoevsky's "visionary beliefs" that the promise of Christ and the possibility of world-transforming love will be realized. Of his Christian faith Dostoevsky writes, "If I believe that the truth is here, in those very things in which I put my faith, then

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what does it matter to me if the whole world rejects my faith, mocks me, and travels a different road?" To which Frank comments, "Here speaks the voice of his 'ridiculous man,' whose dream of the ideal cannot be shaken by the skepticism and incredulity of those who laugh at his preachments. The value of such an ideal, he says, cannot 'be measured in terms of immediate benefit, but is directed toward the future, toward eternal ends and absolute joy.' This is the vision that Dostoevsky upholds as the Russian answer to Western 'enlightenment.'"

That is not a peculiarly Russian answer, however, but simply the Christian answer, which, of course, Dostoevsky believed the Russian soul was uniquely capable of making. Jesus told his disciples that they would be rejected, mocked, and persecuted. Dostoevsky's words are those of all faithful disciples who, as Jesus said, "continue in the truth." They are the words of the martyrs, martyrdom being the frequent fate of prophets. For Dostoevsky, faith is required by the reason that it complements and completes. I hesitate to go so far as James Scanlan in his recent book, *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, in almost making of Dostoevsky a systematic theologian, but there is no denying that Joseph Frank is simply tone-deaf to the philosophical and religious coherence of Dostoevsky's thought. It is a remarkable and in some ways an admirable thing that Frank could discipline himself to devote decades of his life to, and write thousands of pages on, a figure who most critically defined himself by reference to a Christian faith for which Frank has little sympathy and, it would appear, even less curiosity.

Frank writes, "For Dostoevsky, it was a moral-psychological *necessity* of the human personality to experience itself as free." It is necessary to say also that his hard fought conviction, on the far side of his battle with doubts to the contrary, is that the human soul *is* free, and is that by virtue of Christ. The inescapably Christian logic that permeates his work, and especially *Karamazov*, is discovered in the two sayings of Jesus: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" and "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free." Man is free to choose good and evil. That, too, is part of the dignity of being human. Thus Dostoevsky writes that, if criminals are not punished, "you only plant cynicism in their hearts, you leave them with a seductive question and with contempt for you yourself." Frank criticizes that as a "sanctimonious plea" for punishment in order to uphold "age-old inherited pieties of the Russian people." I think not. What Dostoevsky insists upon upholding is the moral agency of the human person.

Frank applies his master template of "reason versus irrational faith" in his interpretation of Father Zosima's critique of rationalistic socialism. He says Zosima is criticizing those who "rely on reason alone," but he is in fact criticizing the irrationality of their view of reason. "They have," says Zosima, "more fantastic dreams than we. They aim at justice but, denying Christ, they will end flooding the earth with blood." Indeed, "were it not for Christ's covenant, they would slaughter one another down to the last two men on earth," and then the last two would kill one another in their fantastic effort to establish the rule of reason apart from the truth of Christ. In our awareness of the consequences of communism's "scientific" doctrine of history in terms of "dialectical materialism" and other rationalist fancies, Dostoevsky, speaking through Fr. Zosima, seems startlingly prescient.

Frank writes that *Karamazov* is about "the moral-psychological struggle of each of the main characters to heed the voice of his or her own conscience, a struggle that will always remain humanly valid and artistically persuasive whether or not one accepts the theological premises without which, as Dostoevsky believed, moral conscience would simply cease to exist." Frank is right about conscience as a witness to human freedom in Dostoevsky's thought, but I expect Dostoevsky would be exceedingly impatient with Frank's essentially aesthetic treatment of conscience apart from the truth to which conscience testifies. Similarly, in the haunting account of Ivan's dialogue with the devil—whether in his fevered imagination or at some other level of reality—the devil taunts Ivan with the fact that his Euclidian rationality cannot account for his determination to help his brother Dimitry. "You are going to perform an act of heroic virtue and you don't believe in virtue; that's what tortures you and makes you angry, that's why you are so vindictive." And that's why, Dostoevsky would have us understand, Ivan's version of reason is so irrational.

The Majestic Legend

And then there is the majesty of the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor. I have sometimes said, only half jokingly, that, if there is one piece of literature that might be added to the biblical canon, it is the Legend. Of course it reflects Dostoevsky's animus toward Catholicism, but it depicts the temptation to which religion, and all forms of Christian religion, not just Catholicism, are susceptible. Many books have been written on the Legend, and many more no doubt will be. Suffice it to say that the Legend is emphatically not about "the conflict between reason and faith." It is about the inextricable relationship between freedom and truth. The Grand Inquisitor, with a perversely heroic virtue for which he is prepared to be damned, spends the night explaining to the silent Jesus why he was wrong about truth and

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freedom. Mankind cannot bear the truth, and is eager to surrender freedom in exchange for the security of lies. The Church has corrected Jesus' disastrous mistake, the Inquisitor explains, and Jesus has no right to return at this late date to threaten the Church's necessary and, yes, noble work. Jesus—the way, the truth, and the life—says nothing in response. "The old man longed for him to say something, however bitter and terrible. But he suddenly approached the old man in silence and softly kissed him on his bloodless, aged lips." The Inquisitor shudders and, reversing his earlier sentence of death, opens the cell door. "'Go,' he says, 'and come no more—come not at all, never, never.' And he let him out into the dark squares of the town."

There is so much that is missed in Dostoevsky, and in *Karamazov* especially, when one imposes upon his writing the interpretative template of "the conflict between reason and faith." Christian faith is the necessary template. Consider the question of theodicy posed to Alyosha by Ivan in an argument painfully concentrated on the undeserved suffering of children. It is the ever vexing question of the Holy Innocents. Alyosha has no neat catechism answer for his brother, and Dostoevsky acknowledges in a letter about *Karamazov* that Ivan's argument is nearly "irrefutable." But then there is the suffering, and then the death, of innocent Ilyusha. Is he or Alyosha the "Christ-figure" here, or are they both that? What has happened with Ilyusha participates in the mystery of redemptive suffering. I quoted earlier Alyosha's words on resurrection. Immediately prior to that, he addresses the boys:

> Let us make a compact here at Ilyusha's stone that we will never forget him, or each other. And whatever happens to us later in life, let us always remember how we buried the poor boy at whom we once threw stones. Let us always remember how good it was when we were together, united by a good and kind feeling which, for the time we were loving that poor boy, made us perhaps better than we are. . . . If a man carries many such memories with him into life, he is safe to the end of his days, and if one has only one good memory left in one's heart, even that may be the means of saving us. Perhaps we may even grow wicked later on, but however bad we may become, yet when we recall how we buried Ilyusha, how we loved him in his last days, and how we have been talking like friends all together, at this stone, the cruelest and most mocking of us will not dare to laugh inwardly at having been kind and good at this moment.

In the ending of *Karamazov*, at Ilyusha's stone, they who are free to choose otherwise know freedom in having chosen love. The knowledge of that possibility "may be the means of saving us." It is, Dostoevsky proposed, also a possibility for the transformation of society. Only months before his death he wrote about how the European rationalist rejects that possibility, claiming that "if the Christians take over, they will immediately begin to massacre the non-Christians." Dostoevsky responds, "On the contrary, complete freedom of faith and freedom of conscience is the soul of true Christianity. *Believe freely*—that is our formula. The Lord did not step down from the cross to inculcate belief *by force* of external miracle, but precisely wished for freedom of conscience. That is the soul of our people and of Christianity."

To which Joseph Frank remarks, "Nothing better than such a passage illustrates the baffling mixture in Dostoevsky of an advocacy of the most reactionary social structures in the name of the most liberal principles." The use of "reactionary" and "liberal" in this context reflects secular liberalism's habit of mind, precisely the habit of mind that Dostoevsky identifies as "European." I suggest that Frank finds the passage "baffling" because he fails to see that Dostoevsky is proposing a way to more firmly ground freedom, including political freedom. Freedom must be grounded in the truth, which is ultimately the truth of love, of redemptive suffering, revealed in Christ. One may fault Dostoevsky's idea of social transformation as implausible or naive or impracticable on any number of scores, but it is hardly reactionary. It is visionary. Or, as Dostoevsky would undoubtedly say, it is prophetic.

Return to the scene where Ivan is challenging Alyosha's faith most relentlessly, demanding an answer to his story of the general who unleashes his dogs on the peasant boy, and to the catalogue of other cruelties against the innocents that he has related. Alyosha is taken aback, allowing that it would be intolerable to accept happiness on the foundation of the unexpiated blood of even one innocent child. Ivan demands to know whether there is "in the whole world a being who would have the right to forgive and could forgive" such injustice. Then Alyosha remembers, and bursts out, "But there is a Being and He can forgive everything, all *and for all*, because He gave His innocent blood for all and everything. You have forgotten Him, and on Him is built the edifice, and it is to Him they cry aloud, 'Thou art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed!'"

It is not true that Joseph Frank's *Dostoevsky* has forgotten Him, but the crucified and risen Christ is safely contained in the category of the irrational. By having Dostoevsky's story told in conventionally liberal

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terms of the conflict between reason and faith, the reader is spared the demand for decision about the truth that, Dostoevsky insists, will make us free. For the student of Dostoevsky, it is not necessary to share his faith in order to try to understand his faith. An account of Dostoevsky that does not invite a decision about what was most decisive for Dostoevsky—without which he says he could not understand himself, and without which he cannot be understood—is sadly flawed.

And God called out to me and said:
"Rise, prophet, rise, and hear, and see,
And let my works be seen and heard
By all who turn aside from me,
And burn them with my fiery word."

I come away from Joseph Frank's biography thinking, "It might have been." The sadness is in knowing that many readers, rightly admiring his monumental labors, and having much enjoyed an interesting story nicely told, will close the fifth and final volume with a sense of quiet satisfaction. Unburned. Not even singed.

FT

Rosenzweig's Battle and Ours

Christianity is Judaism for the Gentiles. That is the maxim attributed, not quite accurately, to Franz Rosenzweig, whose life, Mark Lilla rightly observes, "is among the most moving in the history of twentieth-century thought." Born in 1886 and dying in 1929, after heroically bearing multiple illnesses, Rosenzweig almost became a Christian and then, returning to Judaism, wrote some of history's most searching and imaginative inquiries into what St. Paul calls "the mystery" of living Judaism in its relationship to Christianity.

I suppose it was Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel who alerted me to the importance of Rosenzweig, and I remember reading first his exchanges with the Christian thinker Eugene Rosenstock. Later, I undertook to plough my way through Rosenzweig's big, convoluted, and richly, indeed wildly, elusive *The Star of Redemption*. I found, as others have, at least a dozen ways of figuring out his argument, probably all of them wrong. After years of neglect, there is now, as Lilla reports, something of a Rosenzweig revival, although he is being revived to sometimes conflicting purposes. "The battle against history in the nineteenth century," Rosenzweig wrote, "becomes for us the battle for religion in the twentieth century." By history he, and most German intellectuals of that time, meant the philosophy of history, and the philosophy of history meant Hegel.

Lilla writes: "If Hegel and his epigones were right, the whole of human experience had been explained rationally and historically, anesthetizing the human spirit and foreclosing the experience of anything genuinely new, personal, or sacred. It meant, in Max Weber's chilling phrase, 'the disenchantment of the world.'" Or what Francis Fukuyama more recently—taking Hegel as his reference point—called "the end of history." The doctrine of the Incarnation, Rosenzweig believed, threw Christianity into engagement with history; Christians are "alien citizens," pilgrims on their way to a future fulfillment. As Lilla puts it, "Christian culture moved the waves of history forward, out of antiquity into the medieval world, then to the centuries of Protestantism, and finally to the modern age when, by being secularized, Christianity triumphed. In this way, Christianity prepares the redemption of the world through activity in time."

With Judaism it is very different. "The Jewish people," said Rosenzweig, "has already reached the goal toward which the other nations are still moving. . . . Only the eternal people, which is not encompassed by world history, can—at every moment—bind creation as a whole to redemption, while redemption is still to come." Christianity and Judaism have complementary roles in the unfolding of the drama of redemption. Here is how Lilla describes it: "By complementarity Rosenzweig did not mean that, in order to be itself, Judaism somehow needs Christianity; it does not. But the world, it seems, does. As early as 1913, not long after his aborted conversion to Christianity, Rosenzweig expressed the view that Judaism 'leaves the work in the world to the Church and recognizes the Church as the salvation for all heathens in all time.' Jews do not proselytize but it is good that Christians do. Christianity, on the other hand, needs Judaism if it is to perform this function: while it is busy converting the pagans without, the example of Judaism helps Christians to keep at bay the pagan within. 'If the Christian did not have the Jew at his back,' Rosenzweig asserts, 'he would lose his way.' Christians are of aware of this, too, and hence resent the Jews, calling them proud and stiff-necked. The very existence of Judaism and its claim to have experienced eternity shames the pilgrim Christians, who become anti-Semites out of self-hate, out of disgust with their own pagan imperfections."

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Lilla concludes that Rosenzweig's thought emerged out of "a European philosophical tradition and referred to a unique cultural situation that has been extinguished by history. In that sense, Rosenzweig's thought is dead." He then goes on to add, "What remains very much alive are the vital challenges he saw before Judaism—of assimilation, of Zionism, of power politics, of living in a world shaped by Christianity—challenges that have, if anything, intensified since his death." I am afraid that Lilla quite loses me here. The challenges of history-making are precisely, Rosenzweig insisted, the task of Christianity, not of Judaism. For that reason he was, inter alia, an ardent anti-Zionist.

The title of Lilla's essay is "A Battle for Religion," but it is the battle for religion that, it seems to me, is missing from the essay. Rosenzweig remains a very important figure, and his importance is caught by some Jewish thinkers, such as David Novak in his *Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification.* The intriguing question is what a Rosenzweig-Rosenstock exchange would be like today, when the circumstance of Judaism and Christianity is in so many ways dramatically different—after the death of the *Kultur* Protestantism apotheosized by Hegel, after the Holocaust, after the establishment of Israel. What now is the relationship, in the providence of the God of Israel, between the people of the Eternal Present and the people of the Eternal Future? Or have they now, at least in certain respects, exchanged roles? About the power politics of the Middle East one is doubtful that Rosenzweig would have much of interest to say. On today's "battle for religion," his thought would be—his thought is—very much alive.

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WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ "The literary imagination has not been much taken with scientists who manipulate the deep things of life just because they can." So said Jody Bottum, our poetry editor, at a Washington seminar on biotechnology, with specific reference to cloning. He cited, inter alia, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and H. G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau.* Bottum says: "The truth is, after reading these authors, I worry about people who reach into the stuff of life and twist it to their will. I worry about people who act simply because they can. If they lived in crumbling castles—their hair standing up on end and their voices howling in maniacal laughter—we'd know them to be mad scientists. But they wear nice white lab coats, and their pleasant-looking chief executive appears on television to assure us that they are really acting for the best of medical motives and, besides, there is a great deal of money to be made in biotech and pharmaceutical stocks. . . . The people who say that this technology can be regulated are simply ignorant of human nature. If you were to put up a lever with a sign that said, 'Don't touch or the world will be destroyed,' the paint wouldn't even be dry before someone's last words were, 'I just wanted to see what would happen.'" As things turned out, the "maniacal laughter" did come through loud and clear with the December announcement by an outfit called Clonaid that it had successfully cloned a baby girl. Everybody has since become familiar with the weird cult behind Clonaid, headed by a former journalist who says he was some thirty years ago visited by aliens who helpfully explained how human life had appeared on earth in the first place. On a previous visit, the aliens had populated the earth with their clones. Why of course. Some more responsible mad scientists complained bitterly that the first announcement of a successful clone—although, as of this writing, still unverified—was under such disreputable auspices. "This will be a great boost," declared one enthusiastic meddler in the deep things of life, "to those who want to ban cloning altogether." One may devoutly hope so.

■ The second movie installment of *Lord of the Rings* should generate yet further interest in the question of what J. R. R. Tolkien thought he was up to with that remarkable tale. And that, in turn, should generate interest in Bradley J. Birzer's new book, *J. R. R. Tolkien's Sanctifying Myth: Understanding Middle-earth* (ISI, 203 pp., $24.95). Tolkien was very much a Christian and very much a Catholic, and what he was up to, says Birzer, is the reenchantment of the world. Some critics will undoubtedly say, in the academic jargon of the day, that Birzer's Christian interpretation of Tolkien is "overdetermined." But he lets the man speak for himself, and provides a very impressive bibliography in support of his understanding of Tolkien's intention. Asked the really big question, What is the meaning of life?, Tolkien wrote this: "The chief purpose of life, for any one of us, is to increase according to our capacity our knowledge of God by all the means we have, and to be moved by it to praise and thanks. To do as we say in the Gloria in Excelsis. . . . We praise you, we call you holy, we worship you, we proclaim your glory, we thank you for the greatness of your splendor. And in moments of exaltation we may call on all created things to join in our chorus, speaking on their behalf . . . all mountains and hills, all orchards and forests, all things

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that creep and birds on the wing." To which Birzer adds: "Tolkien the subcreator fulfilled his purpose as best he could. His vocation was to redeem the time through a Christ-inspired and God-centered mythology, to counter the dryness and devastation of the modern world with enchantment, to provide a glimpse of the True Joy, and to speak for all things: Valar, Maiar, incarnate angels, Elves, Dwarves, ents, hobbits . . . even modern men and women. His achievement helps one believe, indeed, that there is always hope." I don't know if Birzer's interpretation is overdetermined, but *Sanctifying Myth* leaves little doubt that Tolkien's purpose was determinedly Christian.

■ "*A Moral Reckoning* is a disturbing journey back into the Goldhagen universe. This is a place in which the black hole of the Holocaust draws the past irresistibly into its darkness, while the present and future are bent back toward it, for the work of restitution and self-cleansing is all-encompassing and has only just begun." So says Christopher Clark, a Cambridge historian, reviewing Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's book-length expansion of a notorious article in the *New Republic* claiming that the Catholic Church is responsible for the Holocaust. Clark, writing in the *Times Literary Supplement*, notes that the many Holocaust scholars who have challenged Goldhagen's argument are dismissed by him "as acting from malevolent or morally dubious motives." One detects an element of dismay in Clark's observation, "I cannot recall ever encountering such venomous ranting in the pages of what purports to be a serious piece of historical writing." For Goldhagen, there is a straight line from Jesus to Hitler. He rather completely ignores the vast literature on the history of anti-Jewish prejudice, including its complicated social, political, and economic factors. "What we get instead," says Clark, "is an intensely teleological narrative in which the horned beast of anti-Semitism creeps, essentially unchanging, through the centuries towards its consummation with destiny in January 1933." Stirred up mainly by German intellectuals, there was a big controversy over Goldhagen's earlier book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, which, Clark says, made him into a celebrity. "It seems unlikely that we shall see a second 'Goldhagen controversy' to match the first," he concludes. I expect he is right. From the reviews that I have seen, it appears that, far from generating controversy, *A Moral Reckoning* has brought about a remarkable agreement among usually contentious scholars that the book is an embarrassing exercise in mendacity and malice.

■ Among the most devastating of many devastating reviews of *A Moral Reckoning* is written by Marc Saperstein, professor of Jewish history at George Washington University. Goldhagen, says Saperstein, sets himself up as the bold truth-speaking prosecutor of the Church but his passionately muddled reasoning sometimes makes him sound like "a defense attorney for Hitler." Saperstein writes: "Goldhagen's attempt to shift the status of church leaders from bystanders to perpetrators of the Holocaust blurs this important distinction, ultimately diffusing the guilt of the Nazis. Despite the complexities and occasional ambiguities in the conceptual framework of perpetrators, victims, bystanders, and rescuers, there is a broad consensus that these categories are valid and useful. The culpability of church leaders, the American government, or the American Jewish community is fundamentally different from the culpability of the leaders of Nazi Germany or members of *Einsatzgruppen*. To suggest that the Church was as guilty of incitement to murder as was Julius Streicher, to imply that Hitler's role was only to provide the match that enabled Roman Catholics to kindle the straw that the Church placed around the houses of Jews, is not to 'speak the truth,' as Goldhagen so frequently claims for himself. In addition to being counterproductive to the purpose he espouses, it is to wander into a conceptual and moral wilderness."

■ So why now are evangelical Protestants and Catholics able to think together in a new way about Scripture and tradition? Reviewing the latest book of Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT), *Your Word Is Truth* (Eerdmans), Stanley J. Grenz of Baylor University suggests that there are deep cultural and intellectual churnings at work: "The current interest in the retrieval of tradition emerges as a part of a larger response to the demise of the kind of epistemological foundationalism that was prevalent throughout the modern era, a foundationalism allied with the empirical science that grew out of the Enlightenment. Among evangelicals, assumptions about the nature of knowledge that reigned in modern society evoked the optimistic belief that scientific methods of Bible study, together with the illuminating work of the Spirit, readily lead the 'Bible-believing Christian' to the true meaning of the biblical texts, and this without recourse to either premodern exegetes or the hermeneutical traditions of the Church. In recent years, however, the confidence of many evangelicals in the modern epistemological triunity of Scripture, the individual interpreter, and the indwelling Spirit has been shaken, a situation that opens the door to a new trio—Scripture, tradition, and Church." He adds that *Your Word Is Truth* and related developments have not adequately come to terms with the question of magisterium or the "locus of authority" in the

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Christian community. And, of course, he is right about that. ECT is a work in progress.

■ After the reign of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin in Chicago, there was speculation about what Father Michael Place, Bernardin's ghost writer and factotum, would do. Not to worry, he has done very well for himself. He became the chief executive of the Catholic Health Association and, according to *Modern Healthcare*, is among the highest paid in that world. The average base compensation for chief executives of major healthcare associations is $399,062. In the year that CHA went from healthy profits to post a $656,559 loss on total revenue of $15.3 million, Fr. Place had his annual salary raised to $529,288, not including $37,000 in benefits and expense allowance. Fr. Place points out that he gives ten percent of his income to the Church, leaving him with barely half a million per year for himself. "After three years in my position, [the CHA board] said I was far below the market basket and needed to catch up to where I should be." Consider, too, that catching up includes those years as a priest in Chicago, which really didn't pay all that much. It is pointed out that Fr. Place's remuneration is 3.7 percent of the total revenue of CHA.

■ I should have made it clear in last month's commentary that the Maurice Blackwell of Baltimore who was shot three times by Dontee Stokes, the man acquitted of attempted murder, had been removed from ministry several years ago. In his testimony in Stokes' defense, William Cardinal Keeler of Baltimore said he regretted reinstating Blackwell in 1993 after he had been accused of sexual abuse and sent for ninety days of evaluation and therapy. While the clarification does not affect the substance of my commentary, facts matter.

■ At the end of each year, the Pope issues a message on world peace, and this time it marked the fortieth anniversary of the John XXIII encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. At the time, many critics of a "realist" bent said the encyclical was a farrago of sentimentality with a distinctly utopian flavor. Forty years later, John Paul II declares it "prophetic" and finds in it lessons that others have missed in their reading of the document. For instance, there is this reflection on how just order is the foundation of peace: "I would like to suggest that the Church's fifteen-hundred-year-old teaching on peace as '*tranquillitas ordinis*—the tranquillity of order' as Saint Augustine called it (*De Civitate Dei*, 19, 13), which was brought to a new level of development forty years ago by *Pacem in Terris*, has a deep relevance for the world today, for the leaders of nations as well as for individuals. That there is serious disorder in world affairs is obvious. Thus the question to be faced remains: What kind of order can replace this disorder, so that men and women can live in freedom, justice, and security? And since the world, amid its disorder, continues nevertheless to be 'ordered' and organized in various ways—economic, cultural, even political—there arises another equally urgent question: On what principles are these new forms of world order unfolding? These far-reaching questions suggest that the problem of order in world affairs, which is the problem of peace rightly understood, cannot be separated from issues of moral principle. This is another way of saying that the question of peace cannot be separated from the question of human dignity and human rights. That is one of the enduring truths taught by *Pacem in Terris*, which we would do well to remember and reflect upon on this fortieth anniversary." The Pope's message also has strong words on the importance of the United Nations in developing the international order necessary to peace. Many will fail to see how the present constitution and practices of the UN can bear the weight of the hopes that the Pope apparently invests in it. The complicated relationship of the Holy See to the UN will certainly be coming in for more discussion if, as is reported, the Holy See applies to become a member nation, as distinct from its present status as a permanent observer. At one time, a number of smaller countries chose permanent observer status but, one by one, they have become member nations, with Switzerland being the most recent instance. Now the Holy See is all alone as a permanent observer, and the fear is that there will be a gradual whittling away of its opportunity for influence in the counsels of the organization. It would appear that the Holy See can meet the official qualifications to become a member nation. It has independent sovereignty over a territory, no matter how small, with permanent residents, and it has diplomatic relations with most of the nations of the world. From a theological perspective, however, the idea that the Holy See can be viewed as a nation among the nations is not without its problems. To the extent that the Holy See represents the Catholic Church and has no raison d'être apart from that, puzzling questions arise. I am by no means joining those who recently, and with crushing lack of success, tried to get the Holy See expelled from the UN. In its role as permanent observer, it has played an invaluable role and perhaps could continue to do so in the future. I do confess to being uncertain about what would be entailed—not so much for the UN as for the Church's self-understanding—in becoming a member nation. If there is, in fact, a move in that direction, you can be sure that we will be coming back to the subject in these pages.

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■ Our reviewer, while not giving it a rave, did have positive things to say about Randall Balmer's recently published *Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism* (Briefly Noted, December 2002). A sterner assessment is offered by *Christianity Today*, the magazine of mainstream evangelicalism, and that despite the fact that Balmer is a contributing editor. The review makes allowances: "In some ways it is appropriate that a sprawling, unstructured subject has spawned a sprawling, unstructured book." But, while noting much of the nuttiness and kookiness in the worlds of evangelicalism, "Balmer gives short shrift to evangelicals' recent attempts to forge a more intellectually rigorous worldview. . . . While evangelical pop culture permeates the book, evangelical thought culture barely appears. Creationism is in; Intelligent Design is out. Tyndale House Publishing, home of the *Left Behind* series, has an entry. Eerdmans, Baker, InterVarsity Press, and Zondervan do not." All good points. I must have a word with our reviewer.

■ The Faith & Reason Institute is a think tank in Washington run by Robert Royal and they recently ran a conference on "Catholics, the Media, and the American Public Square." A booklet by that title includes several presentations, and I was particularly interested in what was said by Rod Dreher of *National Review* and Jody Bottum of the *Weekly Standard*. They both had nice things to say about me, which is, well, nice. Except Rod Dreher says, "Father Richard John Neuhaus of FIRST THINGS has been more of a pastor to me in his writing than any pastor I've actually had in real life," which makes me worry about his experience with priests. Then there is a sharp exchange between Bottum and Dreher. Bottum contends that the Catholic writer has to be careful not to be pigeon-holed as a "professional Catholic." He notes that the left trots out their professional Catholics such as Garry Wills and Mary Gordon to do their little routine of "I'm a Catholic, but I disagree with the Church on (fill in the blank)." On the conservative side, says Bottum, Dreher has fallen into the "professional Catholic" trap in his writing about the current scandals. Then comes the exchange. Dreher: "So what's the alternative? If we only leave the public square open to the Richard McBriens, the dissenters, among the professional Catholic set, who is going to be out there to stand up for what the Church really does teach? Being a faithful Catholic does not mean that you have to fall in line behind the bishops just out of respect for their office." Bottum: "It's when it becomes obsession that it begins to worry me. I also think you are mad, Rod, if you imagine that by being widely quoted in dissent you are thereby going to gain a standing that you will be able to use in the mainstream media when you want to put out a position of orthodoxy. You are not gaining resources on this topic which will then allow you to print something otherwise orthodox on a later issue in the *New York Times*. It's just not true." Dreher: "I just don't see what the alternative is. I don't enjoy attacking the Church, but I think it has to be done and it has to be done from a position of fidelity to the Magisterium and fidelity to the laity as well because the Church is not just the institution." In this case I'm not taking sides, except to commend Dreher and Bottum for making progress toward the achievement of disagreement, as distinct from confusion.

■ Continuing my only half-whimsical campaign against the anti-smoking fascists, I thought you might be interested in this comment on unhappy Wilhelmus Kieft, governor of what used to be New Amsterdam. It is found in *A Knickerbocker's History of New York* by Washington Irving—who, by the way, lived and wrote only three blocks from here. "Wilhelmus Kieft . . . had been greatly annoyed by the factious meetings of the good people of New Amsterdam, but, observing that on these occasions the pipe was ever in their mouth, he began to think that the pipe was at the bottom of the affair, and that there was some mysterious affinity between politics and tobacco smoke. Determined to strike at the root of the evil, he began forthwith to rail at tobacco as a noxious, nauseous weed, filthy in all its uses; and as to smoking, he denounced it as a heavy tax on the public pocket—a vast consumer of time, a great encourager of idleness, and a deadly bane to the prosperity and morals of the people. Finally he issued an edict, prohibiting the smoking of tobacco throughout the New Netherlands. Ill-fated Kieft! Had he lived in the present age and attempted to check the unbounded license of the press, he could not have struck more sorely upon the sensibilities of the [people]. The pipe, in fact, was the great organ of reflection and deliberation of the New Netherlander. It was his constant companion and solace: was he gay, he smoked; was he sad, he smoked; his pipe was never out of his mouth; it was part of his physiognomy; without it his best friends would not know him. Take away his pipe? You might as well take away his nose!" Three centuries later, alas, Mayor Michael (Wilhelmus Kieft) Bloomberg has done it.

■ Bill Buckley tells how he sent one of his books to Norman Mailer, writing in the index beside Mailer's name, "Hi, Norman! I knew you would look here first. Bill." So of course I looked in the index upon receiving *William F. Buckley, Jr: A Bibliography*, edited by William Meehan. So few references to me! Although I'm glad to say that they're all complimentary, while noting that one, upon my becoming a Catholic, is not included.

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Any time is a good time to celebrate Bill Buckley. Since 1951, he has published 31 nonfiction books; 14 books of fiction; 48 introductions and forewords to books by others; 222 obituary essays; more than 800 editorials and other pieces in *National Review*; more than 350 articles for other periodicals; and more than 4,000 syndicated news columns. In his mid-70s he's going strong. Indefatigable is one word for him. Others are joyous, considerate, wry, and generous. He is living one of the notable and edifying lives of our times. And, as you might have guessed, I count it a grace to call him my friend.

■ Aquinas felt quite at home in the growing urban enclaves of the thirteenth century. Man, he assured us, is "naturally a town-dweller," and rural life is "the result of a misfortune." We cannot know what he would have thought about today's suburbs. The *University Bookman* devotes a special issue to the "new urbanism," which has been the subject of a flood of books in the past ten years. Peter Katz, Vincent Scully, James Howard Kunstler, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Kathleen McCormick are some of the big names in the movement. Railing against the suburbs, writes senior editor Mark C. Henrie, used to be a very liberal thing to do: "The critique of the American suburbs has long been a staple of the political left. In the 1950s and 1960s, the ticky-tacky boxes of postwar suburban tract housing were attacked for the conformity and 'inauthenticity' of the lives lived therein, with gray-flannelled fathers making their way in the 'system' and oppressed mothers 'imprisoned' at home with their children. Presumably, authenticity lay in the orgiastic, liberated irresponsibility of urban bohemia. In the 1970s and 1980s, the left's critique of the suburbs moved to environmental concerns. Suburbanites commute, which means that suburban life demands ever more internal combustion engines, holding the fate of earth in the balance. Moreover, it was said, the green-field developments characteristic of suburban sprawl eat up precious 'wilderness,' endangering biodiversity. Finally, in the 1990s, the left's critique took a fanciful turn. Films and other products of popular culture depicted suburban normalcy as a Potemkin village hiding such perversities as incest, murderous amorality, and even cannibalism. Suburban bourgeois life was 'revealed' to be a pathology." Today's new urbanists, who are trying to create real small towns for real people, may be, whether they know it or not, the new traditionalists. The editors write: "Ours, however, is a time unanticipated in progressive ideology—an age of *recovery* in which many have awakened to the wisdom of tradition and the foolishness of our novelties. Still, short of religious awakening, conservatives have been stymied about practical responses to our pressing need for cultural renewal. Culture is a habit of the heart, and therefore not susceptible to straightforward manipulation. Changing the culture seems beyond our power. But asphalt, vinyl siding, street trees, and building codes *are* in our power. This is the hope that the new urbanism offers: a means of renewing the culture by recognizing the culture-forming power of the built environment. Perhaps, in the end, the claims of the new urbanism are overblown. But, after a century of experimental novelty, what remains to be tried is the experiment in tradition. Two centuries ago, Edmund Burke observed that in order for men to love their country, their country must be lovely. Here too, agrarians and new urbanists alike are inheritors of the deepest currents in the conservative tradition." Flannery O'Connor observed that "Somewhere is better than nowhere." Any somewhere. The thing that has always impressed, and depressed, me about suburban developments is that most of them could be anywhere, which is pretty much like nowhere. Of course, I'm an incorrigible city-dweller, and a New York City-dweller to boot, so you probably shouldn't take my word for it. For more on the promising movement called the new urbanism, you might want to check out the Spring 2002 issue of the *University Bookman*.

■ Had we the time for it, we untutored carnivores could learn many things from the dialectics of ethnology, which is the study of putative feelings, thoughts, and even languages among animals. E. S. Turner reviews some new books in the area, including Marc Bekoff's *Minding Animals*. "*Minding Animals* teems with unanswered, partially answered, and unanswerable questions. [Among them] are these: Are animals smart enough to play dumb? Is it permissible to play music to a dolphin as long as they can move away? Do fish look for beauty in a mate, or just symmetry? Sometimes the reader may wish to pose his own questions. How did the researchers prove that 'Female Japanese macaques experience more orgasms when they mate with high-ranking males than with lower-ranking males'?" Also reviewed is a book that advocates better ways to hold conversations with apes. Its author says that the controversy over this provides us with "a wealth of interesting observations on the reactions and assumptions" of those taking part. To which Mr. Turner responds, "And, in the friendliest spirit, that goes for cognitive ethnologists everywhere."

■ Now we're getting somewhere. Long-suffering readers know that I was fond of citing James Joyce to the effect that the Catholic Church is "Here Comes Everybody." Until the pedantic Jody Bottum, our

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poetry editor, spoiled the fun by claiming that nowhere in the Joyce corpus is "H.C.E." applied to the Catholic Church. Several erudite readers, invoking Joycean fragments, have in recent months suggested ways of rehabilitating my wonted usage, for which I am grateful. Now arrives a helpful reflection from Craig Payne of Indian Hills College in Ottumwa, Iowa. Is it possible that what was not seen by the Ivy League has been revealed to Indian Hills? Mr. Payne suggests that the text of *Finnegans Wake* supports the application of H.C.E. to the Catholic (and particularly the Irish Catholic) Church. His letter is submitted in evidence: "In the ongoing dream of Mr. Porter, Porter's dream persona, Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker (HCE), appears to have become identified at one point with Finn MacCool, the legendary or semi-legendary Irish hero of the third century A.D., leader of the Fianna warriors. MacCool is partly human and partly divine; in later stories, he is also described as being of gigantic stature. Anyway—during this sequence the following passages occur: 'The great fact emerges that after that historic date all holographs so far exhumed initialled by Haromphry bear the sigla H.C.E. and while he was only and long and always good Dook Umphrey for the hunger-lean spalpeens of Lucalizod and Chimbers to his cronies it was equally certainly a pleasant turn of the populace which gave him as sense of those normative letters the nickname Here Comes Everybody. An imposing everybody he always indeed looked, constantly the same as and equal to himself and magnificently well worthy of any and all such universalisation. . . . [F]rom good start to happy finish the truly catholic assemblage gathered together in that king's treat house of satin alustrelike above floats and footlights . . . in a command performance by special request with the courteous permission for pious purposes the homedromed and enliventh performance of the problem passion play of the millentury, running strong since creation, A Royal Divorce . . .' A few lines later comes a reference to 'the christlikeness of the big cleanminded giant H. C. Earwicker throughout his excellency long vicefreegal existence . . .' 'Here Comes Everybody,' then, is the other partly human and partly divine Irish giant, the universal and 'truly catholic' assemblage, gathered 'for pious purposes' to watch yet another performance of a passion play, a play which has run ever since creation, when the 'Royal Divorce' took place. And one more point: this passage is presented at precisely the point where the 'christlikeness of the big cleanminded giant' HCE is called into serious question, by accusations of sexual misconduct involving himself and a youngster (a girl, in this case). I'm pretty sure this will clear up nothing, as is the case with most Joyceana. However, it was worth a try." It was, I think, more than a worth a try. It may not be the find of the millentury, but my hunch is that Mr. Payne has hit pay dirt with respect to the ecclesiological significance of H.C.E.

■ For readers under twenty-five or so, says Wilfred McClay in his introduction, "an encounter with the contents of this book may feel rather like the discovery of a time capsule, filled with the brilliant fragments and curious remains of a singular world that has all but vanished." The book is *Alger Hiss, Whittaker Chambers, and the Schism in the American Soul* (ISI). It is not just those under twenty-five who find this a story out of time. I came of political age well after the Hiss-Chambers affair broke in 1948, and for a long time failed to appreciate the ways in which the controversies it engendered defined, perhaps more than any other dispute, the battle lines of American public discourse. That was remedied, at least in large part, by the reading of Chambers' magnificent autobiography, *Witness*. The present book, edited by Patrick A. Swan, is a collection of essays—sometimes inspired, sometimes venomous—on the Hiss-Chambers affair. The controversy went on well into the 1990s, by which time all but the most fanatical of true believers recognized that Hiss was certainly guilty of perjury, and almost certainly guilty of spying for the Soviet Union. Much earlier, William F. Buckley, Jr., who befriended Chambers in his latter years, had written that Hiss' innocence had once been "a fixed rational conviction, then blind faith, and now was rank superstition." Despite everything, the patrician Hiss protested his innocence to the end, and there were still those who desperately clasped the superstition. In one of the many spirited essays in this collection, Hugh Kenner wrote in 1979: "Alger Hiss lives yet, to a rhythm of his own. It is the rhythm of the sewing-machine, busily piecing and stitching; the parts glinting, the motor humming, the needle hopping, the pieces of material lapped and fed: no thread in the bobbin, none in the needle." In *Witness* Chambers had written that communism represented "the next logical step which three hundred years of rationalism hesitated to take, and said what millions of modern minds think, but do not care or dare to say: If man's mind is the decisive force in the world, what need is there for God? Henceforth man's mind is man's fate." Reflecting on the biotechnologies that place in human hands the power to redesign humanity itself, McClay concludes his introduction with this: "Such a statement may well have seemed overdrawn a half-century ago. We will see if it seems less so in the half-century to come." *Alger Hiss, Whittaker Chambers, and the Schism in the American Soul* is a marvelous read—about politics, morality, the American intelligentsia, and the disordering of the human will to believe. One

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consequence of its publication devoutly to be wished is that it might inspire more people, also those under twenty-five, to read *Witness*.

■ Ministers, priests, monks, and other "religious professionals" live longer, according to a study drawn from three decades of research and published in the *Journal of Religion and Health*. A summary of the study reports that "the standardized mortality rate for clergy was below 90 percent, which means that ten percent fewer clergy died than did ordinary people. The study speculated that it may be religious professionals' 'contemplative lifestyle' that accounts for the difference." I suppose this means I must reexamine my assumption that the mortality rate remains pretty steady at 100 percent. I had thought the pattern was more or less standardized, but it appears I've been overlooking some extraordinary people.

■ As professors of what is called sociobiology are inclined to do, David Sloan Wilson explains it all—or at least the ultimate things—in *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society*. Jerry Coyne of the Department of Ecology and Evolution at the University of Chicago says the book is gravely flawed on a number of scores. He also notes: "Finally, as Wilson admits, his theory of cultural group selection also applies to nonreligious social groups, from Freemasons to Marxists, whose tenets rest on emotional symbols and supposed benefits to members. Thus his is a theory of cooperation, not of religion. He fails to address the essence of religion—what it is that sets, say, Catholicism apart from Rotary Clubs. Rates of martyrdom are higher among Catholics than among Rotarians. Understanding the root of this difference would reveal the essence of religion, but here Wilson has nothing to offer." Coyne finds it curious that Wilson's work was funded by the John Templeton Foundation, which is dedicated to promoting harmony between science and religion. The harmony proposed by Wilson, he says, is the disappearance of religion.

■ Once again readers are responding generously to the annual appeal. Believe me, we wouldn't ask for help if we didn't need it. This is not a begging notice but simply a reminder. And, if you've misplaced the original appeal and return envelope, our ever resourceful secretarial staff assures me that they are perfectly capable of handling checks received in the most ordinary of envelopes, and even checks delivered by hand. So you can see everybody is pitching in to keep the editors working, underpaid though they undoubtedly are.

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Sources: On homosexuality and the priesthood, John Leo, *U.S. News & World Report*, May 27, 2002; Ray H. Siegfried II, *New York Times*, January 18, 2003; Robert Bennett, *Boston Globe*, January 18, 2003; survey by Dean Hoge, *Washington Post*, August 16, 2002; Jason Berry, *New York Times*, April 3, 2002. Mark Lilla on Franz Rosenzweig, *New York Review of Books*, December 5, 2002.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT: J. Bottum on mad scientists, *Public Interest*, Winter 2003. Christopher Clark on Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Times Literary Supplement*, November 1, 2002. Marc Saperstein on Goldhagen, *America*, December 2, 2002. Stanley Grenz on *Your Word Is Truth*, *Christian Century*, October 23-November 5, 2002. On Fr. Michael Place, *Modern Healthcare*, February 11, 2002. Review of *Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism*, *Christianity Today*, January 2003. The new urbanism, *University Bookman*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 2002. E. S. Turner on ethnology, *Times Literary Supplement*, October 11, 2002. Religious professionals' mortality rate, *Religion Watch*, January 2003. Jerry Coyne on David Sloan Wilson, *Times Literary Supplement*, November 1, 2002.

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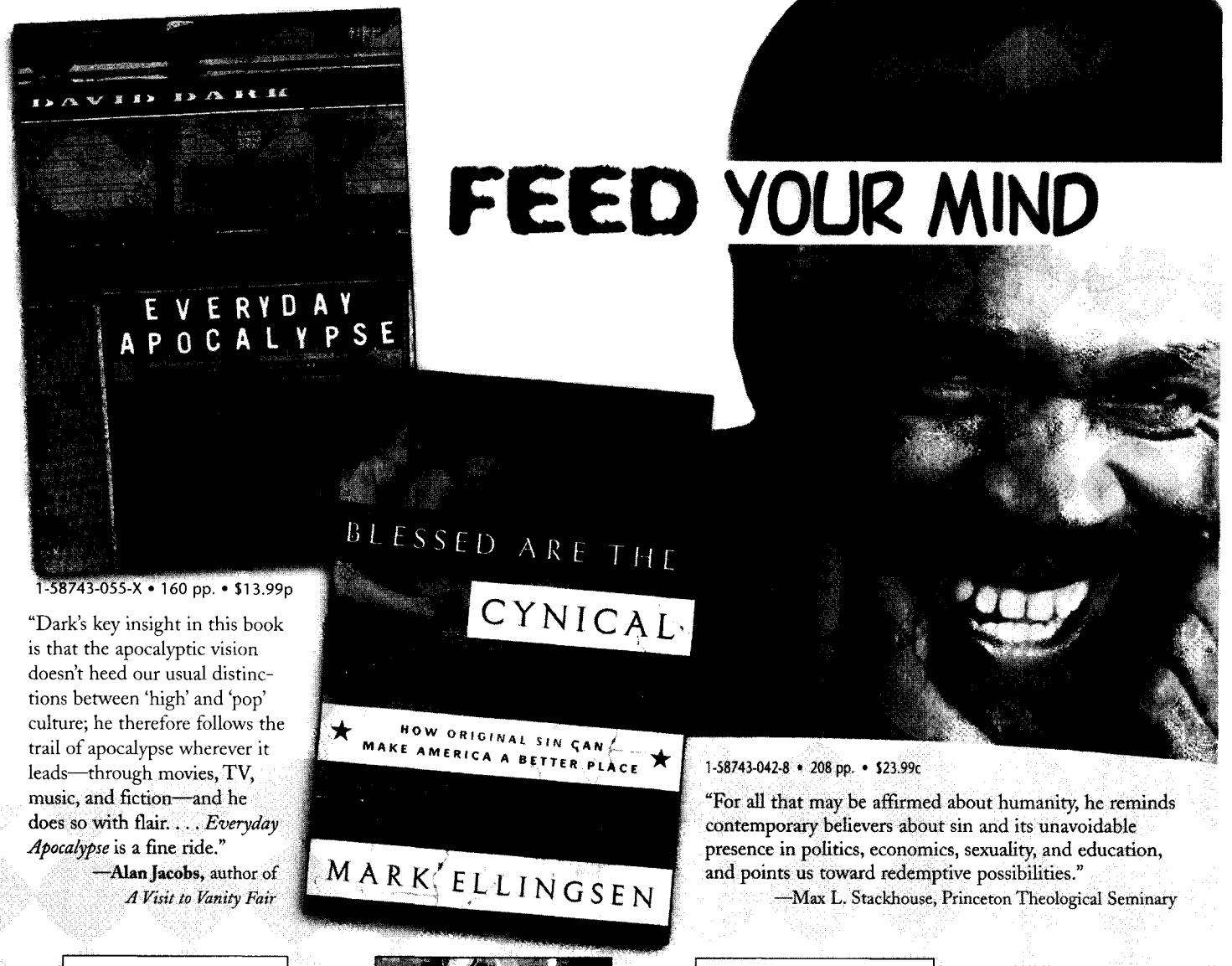

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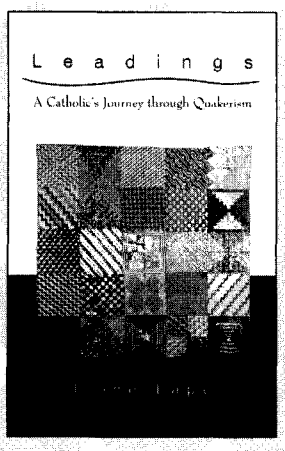

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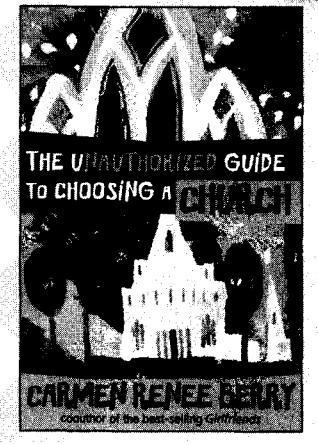

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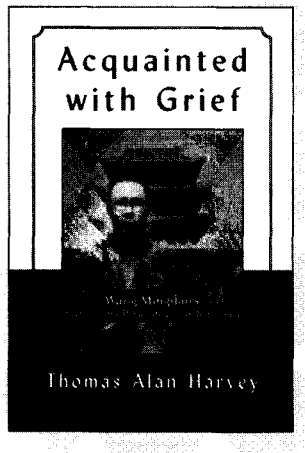

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